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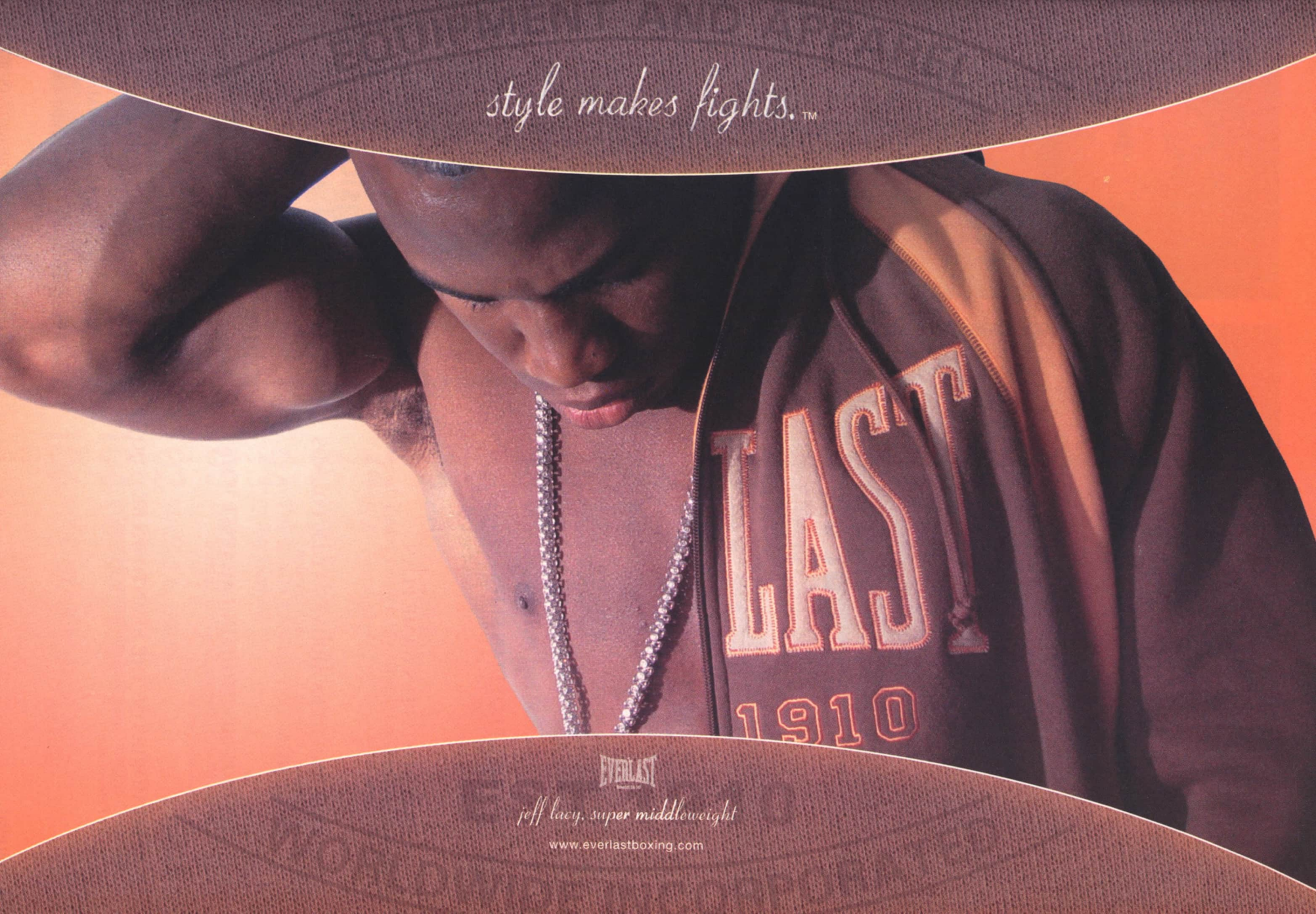
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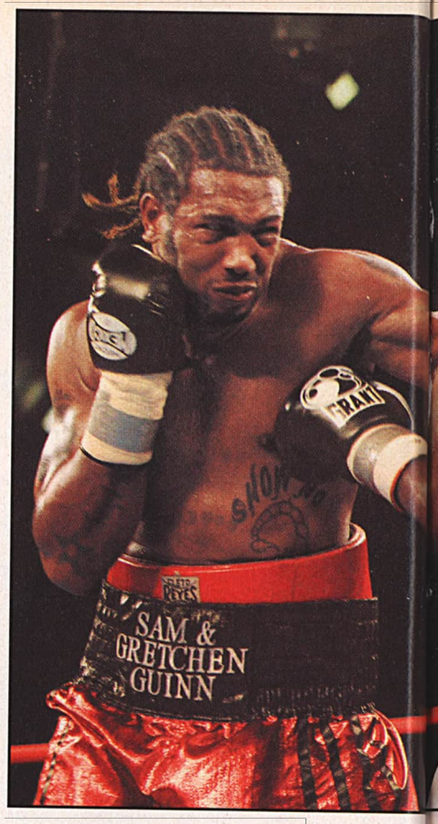

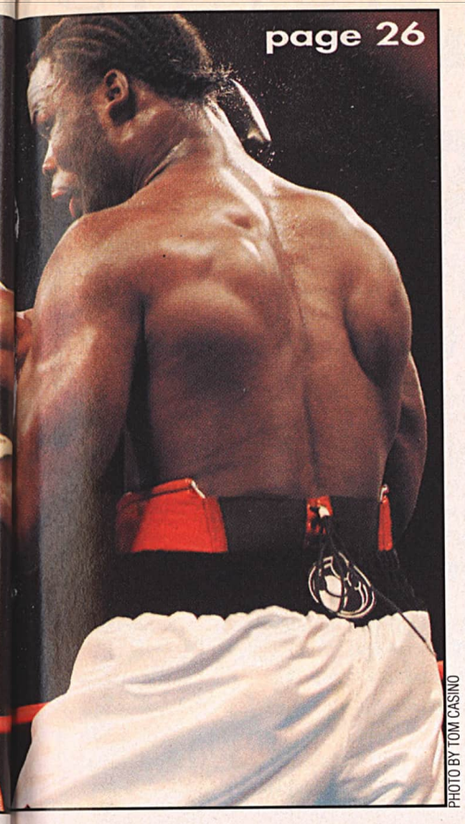

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PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

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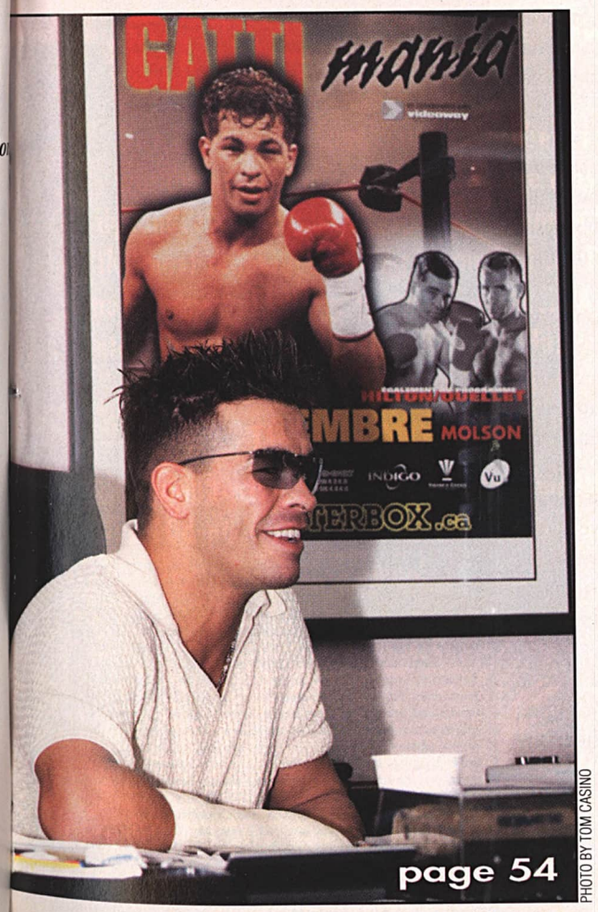

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

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RINGSIDE

If you think of boxing as simply a sport, it will drive you crazy. Either that or it will turn you off to such an extent that you'll walk away in disgust. It's easy to understand why many people feel this way. Just look at some of the things that have happened lately:

•It is revealed that featherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera has had a metal plate in his head since 1997.

•Former IBF lightweight titleholder Paul Spadafora is charged with attempted murder.

•Junior middleweight champion Shane Mosley is subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury to testify in a probe of a company that allegedly produced the "designer" steroid THG.

•Former WBC heavyweight titlist Frank Bruno is involuntarily committed to a mental hospital.

•Beloved warrior and future Hall of Famer Evander Holyfield takes the worst beating of his career, yet decides to keep fighting at the age of 41 after going 2-4-2 in his last eight fights.

And I'm not even going to get into Mike Tyson's latest escapades or the most recent alphabet outrage.

Not that any of this is abnormal, mind you. It's just business as usual. You can open a copy of THE RING from any era during the magazine's 82-year history and read about some scandal and/or tragedy.

True, the rewards for hanging in there through all the crap is the privilege of occasionally witnessing a human drama more compelling and more exhilarating than any other spectacle in sports. But in between those special moments, all the bummers can be overwhelming—unless you start to think of boxing in a different light.

Part of my transformation from a starry-eyed fan to a boxing journalist was the realization that I wasn't really covering a sport. What I was actually writing about was a mesmerizing subculture, an ongoing soap opera with more mind-boggling twists and turns than anything the writers of daytime TV can conjure up. It can be terribly upsetting at times, but in the long run, it's all a matter of perspective. Let's take the most extreme case as an example.

I think everybody would agree that there's nothing worse in boxing than a ring death. When one occurs, the hurt spreads out from those immediately involved and casts a shadow over everybody, including the fans. But we all have to die sometime, and as horrifying as a ring death is, isn't it better to go doing something you love than to be cut down in a drive-by shooting or suffer a lingering death from some incurable disease?

I know that's easy for me to say, sitting safely behind a keyboard, but without a philosophical approach to the sour side of the Sweet Science, they would have hauled me away in a straightjacket years ago. While there are undoubtedly readers who think that that wouldn't have been a bad thing, even they will have to admit that adopting this attitude hasn't made me any less of a crusader. Now, as much as at any time in its existence, THE RING uses its pages to vigorously campaign for boxing reform.

But if I had a magic wand and could solve all of boxing's ills, I would have to think very carefully about where to apply the magic touch. Except for those rare times when everything we dream of comes together inside the ring, boxing without any warts whatsoever would be boring beyond description.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 83, No. 3 **March 2004**

The RING

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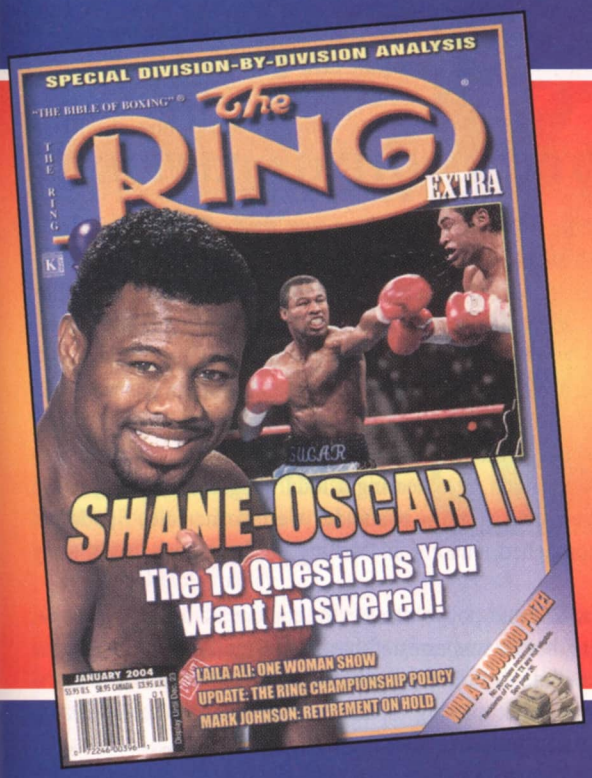

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ROUND ONE

SPADAFORA ACCUSED OF SHOOTING GIRLFRIEND

The old saying that you can take a kid out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of a kid, just might prove a fitting epitaph for talented but troubled Paul Spadafora.

On October 26, Spadafora was arrested and charged with attempted murder in the shooting of his girlfriend, Nadine Russo. The 20-year-old victim was shot in the chest and still hospitalized as we went to press.

According to a police affidavit, Russo drove Spadafora's 2003 Hummer H2 into a gas station in McKee's Rocks, Pennsylvania, shortly before 6 a.m. She had driven over a concrete median and apparently damaged the vehicle. Witnesses reported seeing Spadafora shouting at Russo and later hearing a loud bang. Russo collapsed in the parking lot, and when a bystander went to her aid, Spadafora allegedly approached, cursing and telling the bystander to get away from her.

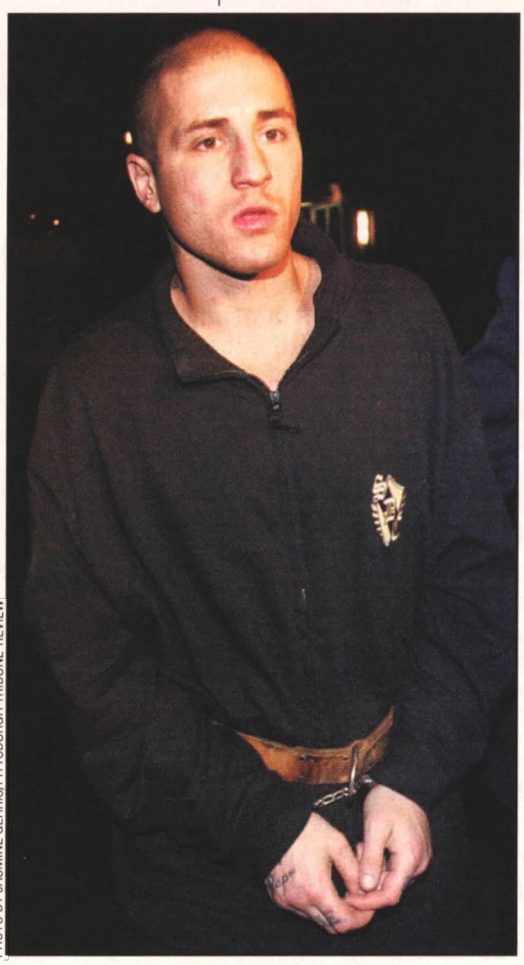


PHOTO BY JASMINE GEHRIS/PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Spaddy is led away in handcuffs

Spadafora, 28, told police that Russo had been attacked by a couple of robbers, but he was arrested based on a statement given by the gas station attendant. Police recovered a .38-caliber revolver at the scene with one bullet missing. Spadafora was arraigned and released on $50,000 bail.

It was not Spadafora's first run-in with the law. He was shot in the leg by police in 1994 when the driver of a car he was riding in ignored an order to pull over, which resulted in a chase. Eight months later, Spadafora landed in jail for underage drinking. The Friday before Russo was shot, the fighter had been arrested on charges of public intoxication and open lewdness after he was seen urinating in the street.

To most fans, Spadafora was a success story, somebody who had used boxing to overcome a tough start in life and escape poverty. He won the IBF lightweight title in August '99 and made eight successful defenses while building a 36-0-1 (14) record. After being held to a draw by Leonard Dorin in his most recent bout, Spadafora announced he was relinquishing the 135-pound belt and moving up to the junior welterweight division.

But Spadafora just couldn't seem to break away from the street life, and in August '02 a friend was arrested at Spadafora's house as part of a drug raid. Spadafora wasn't accused of any crime at that time, but he was obviously still hanging out with a dangerous crowd.

One constant runs through most of the Spadafora's troubles—alcohol abuse.

"Paul always had a problem with alcohol. Everybody knew it," said Jody Torino, a former girlfriend. "If he's not drinking, he's the nicest guy in the world. But when he drinks, he's a totally different person."

"We've been working for a long time to get his personal life on track," Spadafora's manager, Al McCauley, told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. "What happened the other night, it's an accumulation of the things we've been working on. There's a few demons there."

—Nigel Collins

IS SHANE TAKING SHORTCUTS?

Shane Mosley always wanted to be mentioned alongside the upper echelon of sports superstars, but not like this. In October, Mosley was subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury, along with Major League Baseball notables Barry Bonds and Jason Giambi, plus a number of other top athletes, to testify regarding Victor Conte's BALCO Labs, which was credited with creating a new designer steroid called tetrahydrogestrinone, or THG.

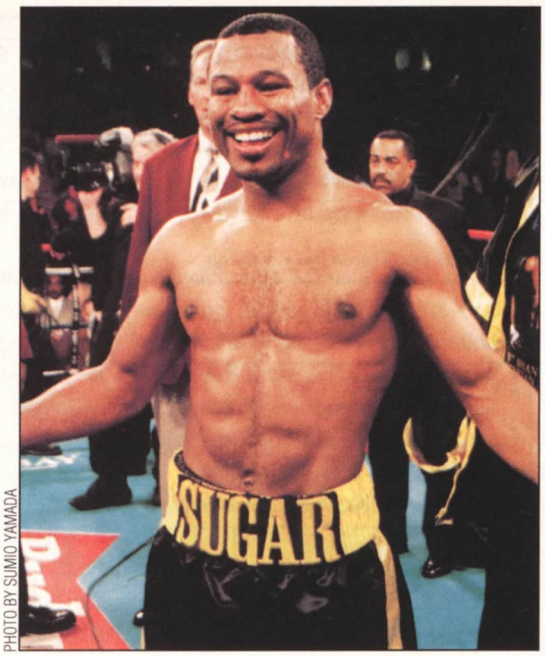


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Mosley: What do they want me for?

THG was thought to be undetectable by modern testing practices until recently, when Dr. Don Catlin developed a test for the substance. Since then, several THG tests turned up positive at the United States outdoor track and field championships this past summer.

The subpoena came at an interesting time for Mosley, who just won the junior middleweight championship with a unanimous—though controversial—decision over Oscar De La Hoya on September 13.

In early-October, Nevada Deputy Attorney General Keith Kizer said that federal authorities contacted him requesting a sample of Mosley's urine specimen following his victory over De La Hoya. Nevada was not able to comply, because the state commission disposed of the samples after testing.

Judd Burstein, Mosley's attorney, maintained to a number of media outlets that his client "never took anything illegal and passed all drug and steroid tests performed by the Nevada Athletic Commission" after the De La Hoya fight. But the commission did not test Mosley for THG. Burstein did admit that Mosley was a client of BALCO Labs earlier in '03, but that "he only bought their legal supplements."

Besides Mosley, Bonds, and Giambi, other pro athletes that received subpoenas were Oakland Raiders linebacker Bill Romanowski and American track and field stars Tim Montgomery, Marion Jones, and Kelli White.

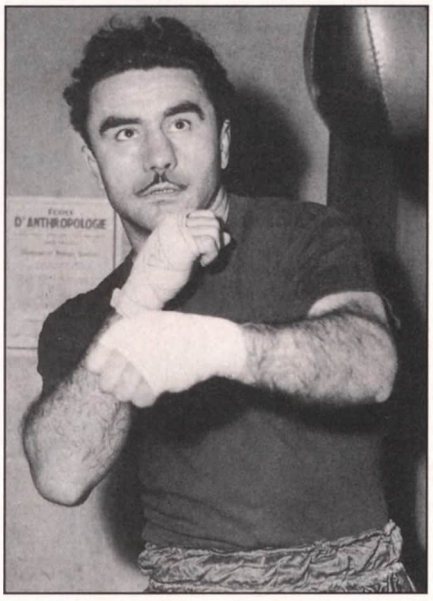
—Joe Santoliquito

LASZLO PAPP, 1926-2003

If Laszlo Papp, who died after a long illness in October, had done nothing besides become the first boxer to win three Olympic gold medals, he would still be long remembered, especially in his native Hungary. But the fact that his country's Communist government thwarted his goal of challenging for a professional world championship made the brilliant boxer from Budapest one of the game's most famous could-have-beens.

Papp, the son of a chauffeur, won his first gold medal at the 1948 Games, beating Great Britain's John Wright for the middleweight championship. He dropped down to light middle after that, winning gold again in '52 and '56. In his final Olympic appearance, Papp beat future light heavyweight champion Jose Torres.

Shortly before the '56 Games in Melbourne, Australia, the Soviet Union had ruthlessly crushed an uprising by the Hungarian people and tightened its grip on the country it had occupied since the end of World War II. It was, therefore, something of a surprise when southpaw Papp was permitted to turn pro in Cologne, Germany, the following May.



Papp: Hall of Famer dies at 77

Papp continued to campaign in Europe for the next seven years, fighting mainly in Vienna, Austria, but still living in Hungary. He annexed the European middleweight title in '62, and defended it six times. Along the way he beat some good fighters, including American imports Ralph "Tiger" Jones and Randy Sandy, and was closing in on a shot at champion Joey Giardello when the Hungarian government pulled Papp's passport and forbade him to compete professionally.

"I was at the edge," said Papp, 26-0-3 (15), of the disappointing end of his pro career. "I went to the door, but was not allowed to step inside."

While Cold War politics scuttled Papp's professional aspirations, he was rewarded with a well-paid government job and by the 1980s was coaching Hungary's Olympic team. He was enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 2001.

—Nigel Collins

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
10-10-03	Rocky Martinez No-Contest 3 Joe Wyatt	ESPN2	jw	C-	B	C+
This was on its way to being a corker; rematch anyone?						
10-10-03	Victoriano Sosa W 10 Miguel Huerta	ESPN2	l	B-	C-	C+
In first fight since loss to Floyd Mayweather, Sosa pounds out solid decision						
10-10-03	Jose Luis Castillo KO 8 Saul Duran	Telef	w	B	C+	B
Tougher-than-expected tuneup until a right to the nose puts Duran down and out						
10-17-03	Juan Ruiz W 10 Phillip Payne	ESPN2	f	C-	B	C
With 10 knockouts in 40 fights between them, you knew this wasn't going to be a slugfest						
10-17-03	Michael Clark W 12 Antonio Ramirez	ESPN2	l	C	C+	C+
So Michael—tell us again why you should be in the top 10						
10-17-03	Antonio Margarito KO 2 Maurice Brantley	Telef	jm	B	D+	C
The second-round kayo of "Six Heads" meant a lot more, but this was impressive all the same						
10-23-03	Jose Luis Valbuena KO 9 David Donis	HBO L	jf	B-	A-	B-
Valbuena nears title shot with hard-slugging win over tough Donis						
10-23-03	Raul Marquez KO 4 Humberto Aranda	HBO L	m	C+	D+	C
Anyone interested in Marquez-Yory Boy Campas II? Nah, we didn't think so						
10-24-03	Demetrius Hopkins KO 5 Roberto Ortega	ESPN2	jw	C+	C-	B
Hopkins shows rare power with one-punch stoppage of awkward Ortega						
10-24-03	Kelvin Davis W 12 Louis Azille	ESPN2	c	C+	A-	B-
Is it us, or does Azille—who deserved to win, by the way—look like a giant-sized Azumah Nelson?						
10-24-03	Eric Regan KO 1 Jaime Llanes	Telef	m	C+	D	D+
Hapless Llanes hadn't fought in two years; let's hope the next layoff lasts a lot longer						
11-2-03	Miguel Hernandez KO 2 Jason Marcum	FOXSN	m	D+	D	C
Hernandez is 5-0, Marcum is 0-5, and Hernandez wins; unbelievable!						
11-2-03	Vitaly Kopitko KO 2 Mack Willis	FOXSN	sm	C-	D-	C-
We don't know yet if Kopitko can fight, but he has a good name for a fighter						
11-2-03	Kofi Jantuah KO 1 Marcos Primera	FOXSN	m	C+	B-	D+
Note to all trainers: If you don't teach your guy anything else, teach him what "nine" means						
10-31-03	Goyo Vargas W 12 Gary Balletto	ESPN2	l	C	B+	B
How is this a majority decision when by the end Balletto looked like Eric Stoltz in Mask*?*						
10-31-03	Orlando Salido W 10 Alfred Kotey	Telef	jl	C+	B-	B-
Keep laughing at the record, Salido will keep beating guys up						
11-1-03	**Juan Manuel Marquez Tech. Win 7 Derrick Gainer**	**HBO**	**IBF/WBA f**	**A-**	**A-**	**D-**
Man, Gainer's hands move so fast it's almost like he's not throwing any punches at all						
11-1-03	**Floyd Mayweather KO 7 Phillip Ndou**	**HBO**	**World l**	**A**	**B+**	**B+**
So what was most impressive? Mayweather's offense, Mayweather's defense, or Ndou's courage?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

DISSECTING BARRERA'S BRAIN

The same conspiracy theorists who credited Felix Trinidad's controversial handwraps, and not his actual hands, with wins over Fernando Vargas, William Joppy, and others, now have an explanation for Marco Antonio Barrera's ability to take the punches of Erik Morales, Naseem Hamed, and others without falling. In late-October, veteran boxing writer Thomas Hauser of secondsout.com broke the story that Barrera had been fighting with a metal plate in his head since 1997.

Barrera's attorney, Stephen Espinoza, responded in a press release that "the implants provide no competitive advantage or disadvantage." Whether that will convince the conspiracy theorists remains to be seen.

In '97, shortly after a close decision defeat in his rematch with Junior Jones, Barrera had surgery to remove a group of malformed blood vessels in his head, requiring several small, protective implants to be affixed to his skull. According to Team Barrera, the blood vessel problem was related to a congenital defect, and not to Barrera's dangerous profession. They say Barrera has since had numerous MRIs that have all come back normal, and according to a June 2003 medical report, "Mr. Barrera's neurosurgical condition does not imply any risk for his professional boxing activity at all."

Espinoza said that Barrera has always informed the proper authorities of his surgery in a timely manner, though immediate knee-jerk speculation labeled his decision to fight Manny Pacquiao in Texas on November 15 an attempt to avoid the Nevada State Athletic Commission's MRI requirement. That belief was pretty well debunked, however, when the Texas Athletic Commission went ahead and asked Barrera to undergo a series of pre-fight neurological tests.

It's worth noting that in his 16 fights since the surgery (the Pacquiao bout was days away when this magazine went to press), Barrera has not been knocked down nor ever appeared badly hurt. Is it because his head has been artificially hardened? Fans of Morales or Hamed might want to believe that to be the case. All that we know for sure is that for the last couple of years Barrera has been using his brain more in the ring, making his ability to take a punch an increasingly irrelevant factor in his success.

—Eric Raskin

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Barrera and his metal plates absorbed Hamed's best blows

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Wepner: Suing Sly

We were expecting to have a "Ringside Report" in this issue on a bout between **Leonard Dorin** and **Miguel Callist**, but instead it just gets a brief note in this section because there was no fight—and there might never be another one for Dorin. The all-action Romanian failed to make weight for the late-October WBA lightweight title bout and ultimately called the fight off and began speaking of retirement. The undefeated 33-year-old was still making up his mind about the matter as we went to press ... **Frank Bruno**, whose mental health problems were detailed last issue, was released from Goodmayes Hospital in England in mid-October after being diagnosed as a manic depressive with an obsessive disorder ... Former heavyweight title challenger **Chuck Wepner**, the inspiration behind the title character in the *Rocky* movies, announced in early-October his intention to sue **Rocky Balboa** himself, **Sylvester Stallone**. Wepner is charging that Stallone has repeatedly invoked his name to promote the films without ever compensating him ... **Mike Tyson's** financial woes continue to mount, as he was ordered in late-October to pay **Kimberly Scarborough**, the mother of Tyson's 13-year-old daughter, **Mickey Tyson**, $62,595 in back child-support ... ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* analyst **Teddy Atlas** received a one-month suspension from the network following an altercation with a male member of the production crew at the October 10 *FNF* show. ESPN would not give further details about the incident that got Atlas in trouble ... Promoter **Lou DiBella** and manager **Gary Gittelsohn**, who handled six fighters together, split in late-October following a dispute over the career development of flyweight **Brian Viloria**. DiBella released **DaVarryl Williamson**, **Jerson Ravelo**, **Yuri Foreman**, **Clarence Vinson**, and **Fernando Montiel** from their contracts, but held on to Viloria ... Ex-fighter **Paul Weir**, an alphabet beltholder at 105 and 108 pounds in the early-'90s, was sentenced to 2½ years in jail in his native Scotland in mid-October for acting as a drug courier ... **Dr. Luther Mack** stepped down as chairman of the Nevada State Athletic Commission in late-October after taking a position on the board of directors for a Nevada casino chain. Commissioner **John Bailey** replaced Mack as chairman, and Las Vegas attorney **Joe Brown** was appointed to fill the vacant spot on the commission ... Former heavyweight fringe contender **Brian Nielsen** retired in mid-October due to an injury to his right knee. The 38-year-old Dane, who went 64-2 (43) over 11 years against mostly limited opposition, is best known for a 2001 knockout loss to Tyson ... There was a ring fatality in the Philippines in late-October, as junior flyweight **Freddie Gimay** was kayoed by **Roger Gadian** in the eighth round of a scheduled 10-rounder and died the next morning. Gimay was 29 years old ... Another 29-year-old fighter, Missouri junior welterweight **Don Talley**, died in early-October after being shot in the head with a handgun at the home of an acquaintance. Talley's career record was 8-1 (4) with 1 no-contest ... Popular 1940s and '50s lightweight **Alexander "Fabela" Chavez** died of lung cancer in early-October at age 73. More an exciting fighter than a truly great one, the Los Angeles-based Chavez, 42-24-5 (12), was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame in 1993 ... Two respected promoter/managers died recently as well: Minnesotan **Joe Daszkiewicz**, who promoted heavyweight **Scott LeDoux**, died from Alzheimer's disease in early-October at age 78; and Los Angeles-based **Ahmed Bey**, best known for working with **Iran Barkley**, died in late-October at age 71 due to complications from a stroke.

Nielsen: Dane done

THE PUNCHLINES

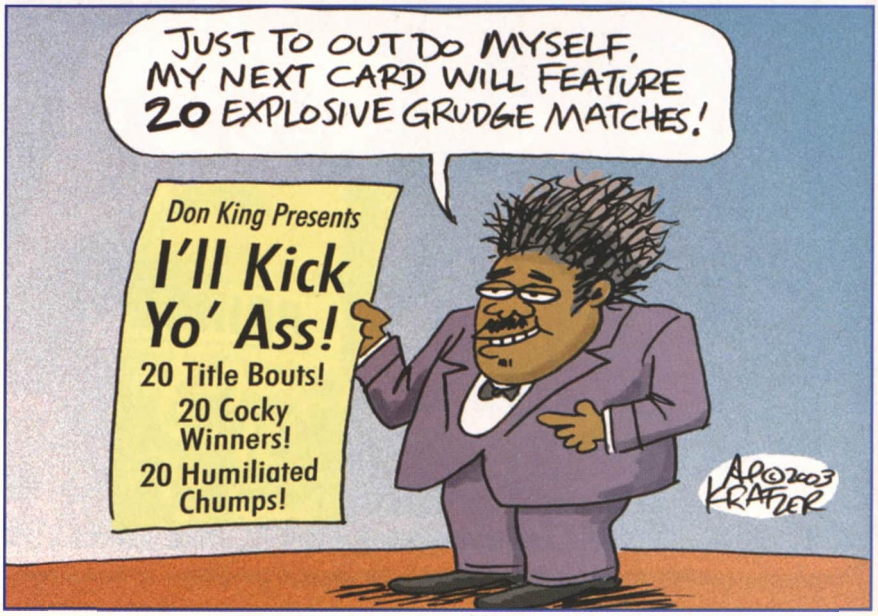
"On his worst day, Gerry Cooney would have used you as a sparring partner."

—Juan Carlos Gomez, in an open letter to fellow heavyweight prospect Joe Mesi

"If you think divorce is painful, wait until you feel this right hand."

—Hasim Rahman, to recently divorced opponent John Ruiz

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended November 6, 2003)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Heavyweight/Light Heavyweight
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
6. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
7. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
8. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
9. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Welterweight
10. **JAMES TONEY**
    Heavyweight/Cruiserweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Julio Gonzalez (sixth last issue) leaps to the number-two position after handing Dariusz Michalczewski (second last issue) his first pro loss. Michalczewski slips to number three. Silvio Branco debuts at number six due to his kayo of Mehdi Sahnoune (fifth last issue). Sahnoune falls to number 10, pushing out inactive George Jones (10th last issue). The shake-up also causes Glencoffe Johnson (third last issue) and Eric Harding (fourth last issue) to drop one spot each.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Carl Daniels (seventh last issue) exits because he hasn't fought in more than a year. His departure allows Evan Oure Ashira (eighth last issue), Felix Sturm (ninth last issue), and Kingsley Ikeke (10th last issue) to advance one spot each. Previously unranked Eric Regan is aboard at number 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Even though he lost a bid to win the lightweight championship, Phillip Ndou (fourth last issue) says he will continue to campaign at 135 pounds, and has therefore been removed from the 130-pound rankings. Everybody rated below Ndou in the last issue advances one spot each, with Jorge Barrios re-entering at number 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Derrick Gainer plummets from second to fifth following his non-effort loss to number-one contender Juan Manuel Marquez. Gainer's demotion lifts Manuel Medina (third last issue), Scott Harrison (fourth last issue), and Johnny Tapia (fifth last issue) one place each. The epic In Jin Chi-Michael Brodie draw also prompts a reevaluation of the bottom half of the top 10, with Chi debuting at sixth, and Brodie improving from eighth to seventh. Brodie's jump shoves William Abelyan down from seventh to eighth. Lehlo Ledwaba (sixth last issue) departs due to inactivity.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Willie Jorrin (seventh last issue) is gone after losing to Cristian Favela at 126 pounds. Everybody rated below Jorrin last issue climbs up one rung, and Nedal Hussein returns at the 10th spot.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Busy Genaro Garcia (ninth last issue) switches places with relatively inactive Silence Mabuza (eighth last issue).

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Floyd Mayweather's scintillating TKO of highly regarded Phillip Ndou elevates him from eighth to sixth, which pushes down Kostya Tszyu (sixth last issue) and Erik Morales (seventh last issue) one spot each. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended November 6, 2003

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

After his brutal draw with Michael Brodie, In Jin Chi enters the featherweight ratings at number six

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 41-2-1 (32)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 37-2 (20)
2. **CORRIE SANDERS**
South Africa 39-2 (29)
3. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)
4. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 32-2 (31)
5. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
6. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 42-3-1 (37)
7. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-4-1 (29)
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 41-2 (38)
9. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 24-2 (15)
10. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 50-4 (44)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: SHANE MOSLEY
Pomona, CA 39-2 (35)

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 36-3 (29)
2. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 45-3 (25)
3. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 23-2 (21)
4. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 56-5 (38)
5. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 27-2-1 (20)
6. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 18-1-1 (12)
7. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 36-9-1 (18)
8. **J.C. CANDELO**
Colombia 27-5-3 (19)
9. **ALEX GARCIA**
Mexico 22-0 (21)
10. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 46-5 (30)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Mexico 57-3 (40)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 42-2 (33)
2. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 62-13 (28)
3. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 19-2-1 (9)
4. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 53-3-2 (28)
5. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-6-1 (24)
6. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 27-2-1 (16)
7. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 35-1-1 (23)
8. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 23-4-1 (12)
9. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 18-0 (14)
10. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Tulsa, OK 24-0 (14)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-2 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 37-2-1 (28)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 49-3-1 (34)
3. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 23-2-2 (14)
4. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 23-2-1 (13)
5. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 35-3 (26)
6. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 41-4-1 (21)
7. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 20-0 (16)
8. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-2-3 (15)
9. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 34-1-1 (18)
10. **NEDAL HUSSEIN**
Australia 31-1 (18)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 30-3 (27)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 41-1-2 (29)
3. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 25-1-1 (22)
4. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 24-11-1 (20)
5. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 54-2 (26)
6. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-3-3 (14)
7. **PETE FRISSINA**
Tarpon Springs, FL 27-3-1 (15)
8. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 30-4 (18)
9. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 14-0 (13)
10. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 28-2-2 (13)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JAMES TONEY**
   Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 33-1 (29)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 29-2 (21)
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 19-0 (16)
5. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 42-12-2 (28)
6. **GUILLERMO JONES**
   Panama 29-2-2 (22)
7. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 21-1-1 (20)
8. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 26-5 (24)
9. **SEBASTIAN ROTHMAN**
   South Africa 17-1-2 (12)
10. **VIRGIL HILL**
    Bismarck, ND 49-4 (23)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 48-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 21-1 (17)
2. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 35-1 (22)
3. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-1 (38)
4. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 39-9-1 (27)
5. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadelphia, PA 21-3-1 (7)
6. **SILVIO BRANCO**
   Italy 49-6-2 (30)
7. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 44-4 (29)
8. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-2 (21)
9. **RICHARD HALL**
   Winter Haven, FL 27-4 (25)
10. **MEHDI SAHNOUNE**
    France 24-1 (21)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 36-0 (29)
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 32-0 (6)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 19-1 (14)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-5-1 (26)
5. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 36-5-3 (13)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-3-1 (18)
7. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 28-1 (11)
8. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 40-9 (28)
9. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
10. **SYD VANDERPOOL**
    Canada 34-2 (23)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 42-2-1 (31)

1. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-2-1 (25)
2. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 38-1 (35)
3. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 35-4 (26)
4. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 30-3 (19)
5. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 19-3 (13)
6. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AK 17-0 (12)
7. **EVANS OURE ASHIRA**
   Denmark 23-0 (13)
8. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 19-0 (9)
9. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
   Canada 18-1 (10)
10. **ERIC REGAN**
    Roseville, CA 21-0 (14)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: RICARDO MAYORGA
Nicaragua 25-3-1 (22)

1. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 29-3 (20)
3. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 31-2 (11)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 32-0 (25)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 39-2 (25)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 23-10 (18)
7. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 22-2-1 (20)
8. **TEDDY REID**
   Adelphi, MD 22-5-1 (16)
9. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 22-1-1 (13)
10. **JOSE RIVERA**
    Worcester, MA 37-3-1 (24)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 52-3 (30)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 29-1 (21)
3. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 36-6 (28)
4. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 23-1-1 (16)
5. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-2-1 (16)
6. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 33-1 (10)
7. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 33-0 (25)
8. **OMAR WEIS**
   Los Angeles, CA 36-4-3 (16)
9. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 17-0 (14)
10. **JUNIOR WITTER**
    England 27-1-2 (16)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 31-0 (21)

1. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-2-1 (25)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 48-6-1 (44)
3. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 21-0-1 (7)
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
5. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-0 (22)
6. **COURTNEY BURTON**
   Benton Harbor, MI 19-1(11)
7. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 49-5-1 (33)
8. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-3-2 (41)
9. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 46-10-2 (33)
10. **VICTORIANO SOSA**
    Dominican Republic 36-3-2 (26)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 34-0 (31)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 30-1 (19)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-2 (28)
4. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 40-3-1 (24)
5. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 45-1 (34)
6. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 37-2 (31)
7. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 23-2 (6)
8. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 39-2-1 (32)
9. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 28-1 (16)
10. **JORGE BARRIOS**
    Argentina 39-2-1 (29)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 29-2-1 (8)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 24-0 (23)
3. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 42-3 (27)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 21-1 (14)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 26-1-1 (20)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 24-1 (15)
7. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-4-1 (11)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 30-4-1 (20)
9. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 38-0 (28)
10. **OSCAR ANDRADE**
    Mexico 30-22-1 (17)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 33-0 (18)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 47-2 (25)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 28-0 (21)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 28-4-2 (17)
5. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 14-1-2 (10)
6. **PETER CULSHAW**
   England 23-1-1 (12)
7. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 14-0-2 (8)
8. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 21-0 (17)
9. **ALEXANDER MAHMUTOV**
   Russia 42-6 (21)
10. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
    Australia 19-0 (14)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-1 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 34-3-1 (25)
2. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 28-2 (23)
3. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 27-2 (12)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
5. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 25-2 (14)
6. **MELCHOR COB-CASTRO**
   Mexico 66-9-4 (30)
7. **MHIKIZA MYEKENI**
   South Africa 17-1 (6)
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-2 (21)
9. **JOSE VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 36-13-2 (21)
10. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
    Thailand 50-3-2 (20)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 30-1-1 (19)
2. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-2-1 (10)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 32-1-1 (27)
4. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
   Japan 14-1-3 (7)
5. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 49-2-2 (17)
6. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 23-10 (6)
7. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 32-7-2 (22)
8. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 22-2-1 (19)
9. **EDGAR CARDENAS**
   Mexico 30-11-2 (16)
10. **IVAN CALDERON**
    Puerto Rico 17-0 (3)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

JERKS AND THEIR QUIRKS

Trying to identify the most annoying people in boxing is like attempting to determine which Mike Tyson quote has been the all-time stupidest or which Atlantic City round-card girl is the prettiest. The competition is so fierce, it makes the Yankees-Red Sox rivalry look like a backyard game of Whiffle ball. Nonetheless, by the time all of our candidates were sorted through, the cream had risen to the top (or maybe the sludge had sunk to the bottom) once again.

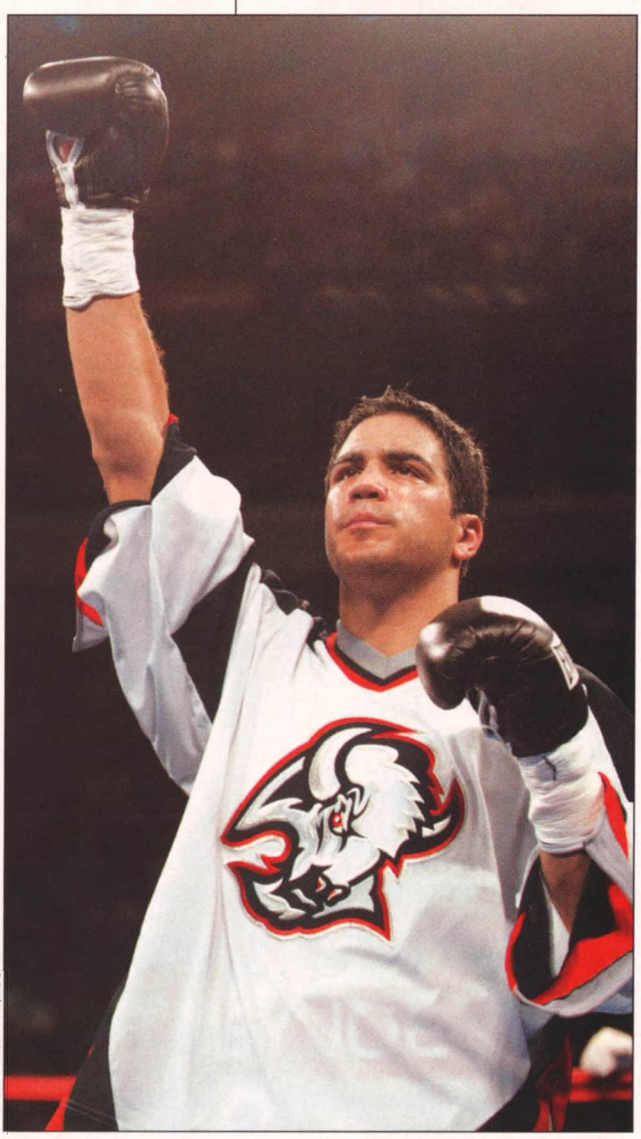


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mesi has yet to convince Ryan

In no particular order of annoyance, the biggest pains in the ass are …

•Baby Joe Mesi: The Buffalo banger has already gotten ESPN, HBO, and a lot of fight scribes in a New York State of mind. Is Mesi the next "Great White Hope"? The next heavyweight champion? No, he's probably the next president of the Gravedigger's Union. Just look at the names on his record. You won't see that many dead bodies in the remake of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.*

Mesi is considered Buffalo's third pro sports franchise, and he's clearly the one with the best winning percentage. Of course, if the NFL's Bills and NHL's Sabres were also allowed to square off with nothing but last-place teams, they, too, might be undefeated. As we went to press, Mesi was preparing to bully another carefully selected victim, Monte Barrett, at Madison Square Garden. Let's just say that the folks up in Canastota haven't felt compelled to clear wall space just yet.

Mesi and his daddy, Jack, have indicated that they'd like a crack at Tyson. How convenient. Call out a guy who is suffering from a truckload of emotional problems and isn't even sure he wants to fight anymore. Excuse me, Baby Joe, but there are a lot of other tests out there to take: Corrie Sanders, Wladimir Klitschko, the winner of Hasim Rahman-John Ruiz. Call one of those guys for a date and stop buffaloing us with these mismatches. Heck, if your record was any more padded, the goaltender for your beloved Sabres could use it as a chest protector.

•Roy Jones: The difference between Michael Spinks and Jones isn't just that light heavyweight champ Spinks beat *the* king of the big men to win the heavyweight crown. It's that Spinks remained at heavyweight after dethroning Larry Holmes and fought challengers (Gerry Cooney, Tyson) who were capable of defeating him.

When Jones thrashed Ruiz in March and then talked about going after the Tysons, Holyfields, Tuas, and even

Lennox Lewis, we foolishly thought the safety-first, think-everything-through-20-times version of Jones was gone, replaced by a risk-taker who hungered to display his array of skills on a new stage. But then Jones dropped back down to 175 pounds to defend his light heavyweight crown against Antonio Tarver and dropped our spirits in a heap.

While facing the dangerous Tarver doesn't normally open up a guy to criticism, Jones deserves plenty. For while we were being bamboozled into thinking he'd become a heavyweight in order to further challenge himself and define his greatness, it appears that Jones was merely doing the same handpicking of foes as always. Ruiz was just Clinton Woods with a heartier appetite.

Will Jones again fight at heavyweight? Probably, but don't expect him to ever dare challenge the division's true elite.

•Bob Arum: Believe it or not, the carnival barker who promoted Evel Knievel's nosedive into the Snake River Canyon and 15 tedious rounds of Antonio Inoki-Muhammad Ali has found a new way to embarrass himself.

Sure, Oscar De La Hoya got jobbed in his rematch with Shane Mosley, but Arum turned the postfight press conference into his own personal venting session, slandering Nevada Athletic Commission Chairman Flip Homansky in the process by claiming that Homansky had influenced the selection of the judges. Included in Arum's veins-a-bulging tirade was a threat to get out of the boxing game for good.

Arum later apologized and changed his mind about putting a "For Rent" sign in the window of his Top Rank office. Too bad. If he really wanted to make a point, Arum should have quit. Then he would have been seen as a man who truly couldn't tolerate injustice, and not just a phony who thinks shaft jobs are okay as long as his fighter's rival is the one being shafted. (See De La Hoya W 12 Pernell Whitaker, 1997.)

•Evander Holyfield: His selfishness and egomania can be infuriating. Holyfield's stubborn refusal to stop stealing the ticket-buyers' money and wasting the boxing media's time is making things tough on those of us who have always admired the man and long hoped that he could bow out with his dignity, reputation, and brain cells intact.

It's impossible to wish for the thorough destruction of an all-time great and genuine nice guy who has done so much for his profession. And yet, until he gets knocked absolutely cold or beaten into a bloody heap, "The *Unreal* Deal" will no doubt remain convinced that he can still be heavyweight champion someday. In the weeks following his knockout defeat to James Toney, Holyfield went so far as to indicate that he's fighting on for his son, who made a bet that Dad would regain an alphabet belt.

If it can get any sadder than this, let me know. Oh yeah, that's right. It can. Just as soon as Holyfield gets off his stool the next time and the bell sounds.

•Nevada judges: "The Sagebrush State" has been responsible for more screwing than Wilt Chamberlain and The Mayflower Madam combined. The latest travesty was awarding Mosley the decision over De La Hoya. Please, don't try to explain to me all of these theories about Nevada judges favoring the harder puncher, the aggressor, the guy with the thicker mustache, etc. Hey, there's no logic behind their scoring. They're simply orbiting in a different solar system from the rest of us.

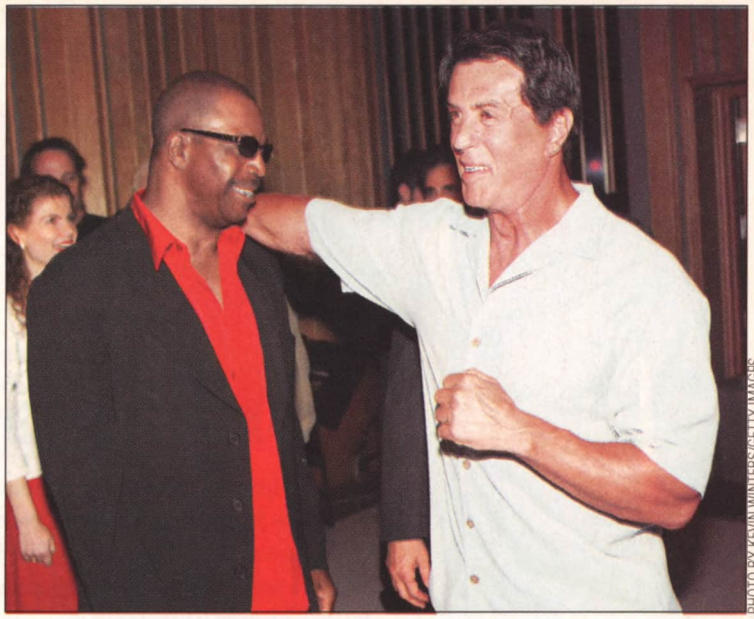


PHOTO BY KEVIN WINTERS/GETTY IMAGES

Stallone tries to talk Carl Weathers into making a comeback

Or maybe it has something to do with the air in the Nevada desert following all of those A-bomb tests. Oddly, it's not just Nevada residents who score bouts that make us shake our heads for weeks. Foreign judges who come to Nevada turn in surreal scorecards, too. The robberies have been going on for at least two decades now. Since they show no signs of stopping, maybe the promoters should stop staging bouts in Nevada. Take that nice flow of green out of the local economy and watch how fast the Fords, Giampas, Roths, and Shirleys are told to turn in their pencils.

•Sylvester Stallone: He's working on the script for *Rocky VI*, and the film is due in theaters in 2004. The plot has something to do with a 54-year-old Rocky Balboa being lured out of retirement for, yes, one more fight. Like Holyfield, Stallone just doesn't know when to fold a once-great franchise.

After stinking up the Cineplex with *Rocky III* and *Rocky IV*, Stallone actually caught a second wind and did a nice job with *Rocky V*. But enough is enough. The only way Rocky Balboa could be even remotely interesting these days is if the character provides insight into what can happen to a fighter after the wars catch up with him. Let's see Rocky suffering from the same problems that have befallen Ali and Floyd Patterson. There's a lot of interesting territory to explore there.

Of course, that would require Stallone, a.k.a. Captain Cliche, to resist the temptation of having Rocky bleed and throw punches. And that's asking a lot. Is Stallone even capable of updating a script to fit with the times? These days, there'd have to be a lot more references to the Mohegan Sun than the Philly Spectrum. And Rocky's "Yo, Adrian" would have to give way to "Adrian, yo." See, there are problems, galore. Better that you milk the Rambo series some more, Sly. Or—here's a crazy idea—come up with something entirely new. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

COLLEAGUE CONFLICT

Not long ago in the pages of our sister publication *World Boxing*, my colleague and buddy Joe Santoliquito expressed concern because HBO's Jim Lampley had been overlooked for an award of some kind. Although no one forces me to, I read *World Boxing* cover to cover because I really enjoy it. But Joe's comments were just one more example of why lately I've been grinding my teeth while I read it.

Listen, I've met Lampley. I admit he's a nice guy who does a nice job. But since when do print guys waste tears on multimillionaire broadcasters with a clothing allowance?

I saw Joe in Las Vegas after his comment appeared (we live on different coasts) and tried to explain that if he wants to get anywhere in this world, he's got to learn maliciousness. Remember what Oscar Wilde said: "It's not enough to succeed. Others must fail." I'm hopeful my little pep talk will help Joe become the avaricious, envious jerk I know he can be if he'll just put in the effort.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

Maybe Lennox would be safer on the baseball diamond?

But when I open another issue, what do I see? Joe's complaining that HBO has never showed a female fight. "Hopefully," he says, "HBO will change its policy."

Listen, if a qualified woman wants to run for President, I'm all for it. But if she wants to get busted up in the ring, she won't do it with my help. I understand women have a right to punch each other in the face, but I reserve the right not to like it. HBO has the same right. Men and women are not the same, Joe. If they were, you'd be pregnant by now.

In that same issue, European correspondent Brian Doogan, an exceedingly intelligent, personable Irishman who hangs his hat in England, wrote an entire article arguing that if Lennox Lewis fails to give a rematch to Vitali Klitschko, it will stain his career and haunt him forever. Once again, it pains me to rebuke a friend. Brian is one of the few people on earth who ever bought me dinner.

But he apparently fails to notice that at 38, Lewis is a *shot fighter*. The only thing Lewis might prove by fighting Klitschko again is that he can still make it into the ring without a walker.

Ironically, the photograph accompanying Brian's story showed Lewis with more gray hairs (chest and beard) than I have (almost).

Fortunately for Brian, he's too young to understand the dynamics and cruelty of a body that no longer works the way it used to. We should not be encouraging Lewis to follow the same, sorry post-career path as great champions like Sugar Ray Robinson, Joe Louis, Archie Moore, Sugar Ray Leonard, and countless others who fought sometimes as much as a decade past their prime.

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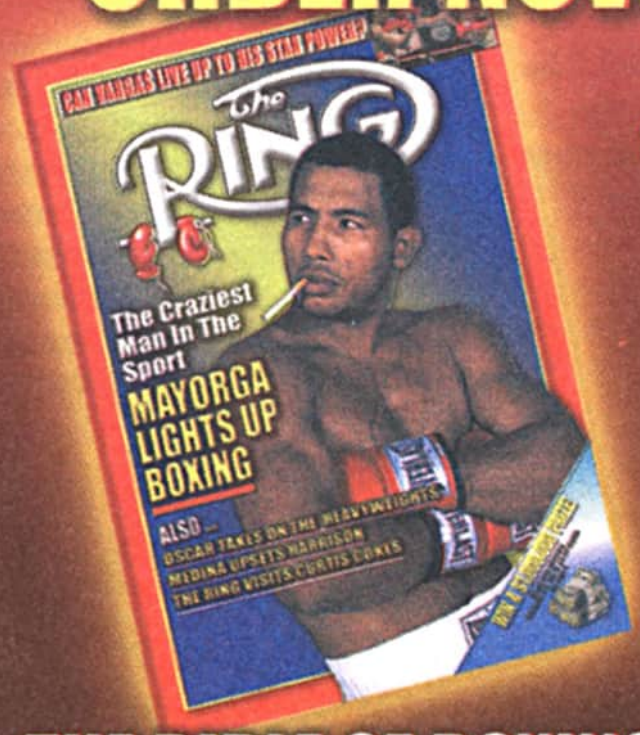

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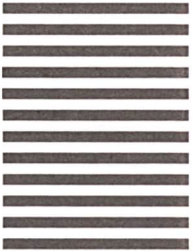

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In Lewis' case, the fat lady not only sang, she's changed out of her costume and is on her way to 7-Eleven for a monster Slurpy and a dozen Twinkies.

THERE AIN'T NO (ALPHABET) JUSTICE: The funniest complaint promoter Bob Arum had about the officiating in Oscar De La Hoya vs. Shane Mosley II was that judge Stanley Christodoulou was never approved by the WBA. Instead, he was appointed by Nevada commission Executive Director Marc Ratner.

Ratner chose Christodoulou because he was unhappy with the WBA's list. Anyone who thinks they are going to get a straighter deal from WBA President Gilbert Mendoza or his kid, Gilbert Mendoza Jr., who coincidentally also happened to find employment with the WBA, is nuts.

Which, incidentally, brings us to the comment by Mosley's promoter, Gary Shaw, about Arum after he questioned the integrity of the judges: "It's almost as if he's nuts."

I thought the world "almost" was diplomatic but unnecessary.

Speaking of Gilbert Mendoza Jr., I understand he, Carl King, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, Connecticut Senator Chris Dodd, and President George W. Bush play cards together every Wednesday night and tell each other their daddies had nothing to do with how they got their jobs. They always look forward to it because nobody else believes them.

NOBLEST SPORT: Arum, outraged because all three judges had Mosley over De La Hoya, 115-113, called boxing a "sewer sport," among other things. You would never hear a coach, manager, or owner say that about baseball—for two reasons. One, they would get fined and/or suspended big-time. Two, they love their sport. Boxing has warts, but what sport doesn't?

In sports, things happen fast, and they must be decided now, not in six months. There are times many of us would like to see boxing decisions overturned, or at least reviewed. But that's no reason to trash an entire sport.

Sure, boxing has some rotten elements. But it also has much that is noble. Many of us believe that when it's done right, it's the noblest of sports. And the kind of nobility I'm talking about has nothing to do with the size of the purse. Two guys no one ever heard of who will never be world champions can show us a greatness and depth of character that glows from the ring like golden light.

But rather than focus on what's noble, Arum chose to focus on something he disagreed with and then damned boxing altogether. The fight game is a kind of anarchy in that regard. There's no serious authority to discipline a loose cannon. The Nevada commission flirted with the idea, but discarded it when Arum more or less apologized, presumably after viewing the tape.

The truth is, I like the fact that boxing lacks the rigid, think-speak oversight you will find in other sports. I'm glad Arum's free to speak. And I'm glad I'm free to write that he's full of crap.

Some nincompoop writing for MSNBC's Web site said the Mosley-De La Hoya decision proved boxing is a dying sport, that this is the last nail in the coffin. The only thing I saw wrong with this magnificent event was the venue. It held only 16,500.

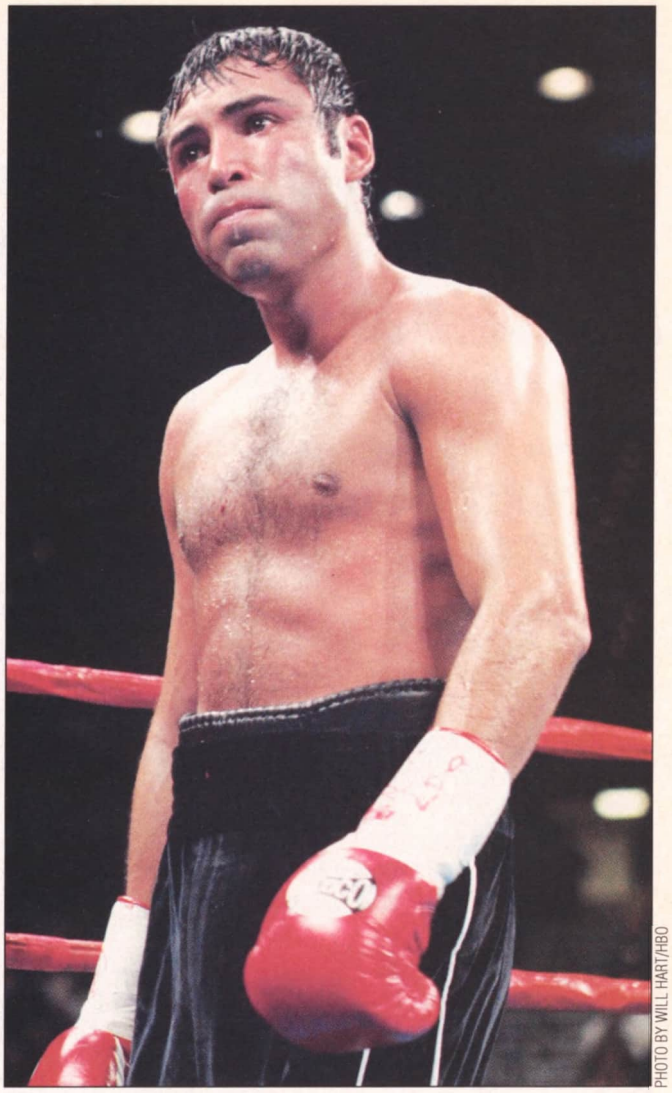

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

How's that investigation going, Oscar?

Given all the attributes of great fighters like Mosley and De La Hoya, with a little luck and lots more imagination, we might see boxing crowds filling up the ballparks again. Life is sweet. And if Osama Bin Laden isn't dead by the time you read this column, remember the words of Scarlet O'Hara: Tomorrow's another day.

De La Hoya, one of the greatest eight-round fighters ever, doesn't realize it, but if the decision were reversed as a result of his "investigation," it could have destroyed his career and dealt a terrible, possibly mortal blow to the sport.

Such an outcome would make it look like the officials bowed to the power of Arum and Oscar, and that would probably have been a fair analysis. Remember when Don King tried to erase Buster Douglas' kayo of Mike Tyson because he claimed Douglas should have been counted out in an earlier round? King found out in a hurry there was nothing but disaster down that road.

If Oscar actually got his investigation, I can sees the transcript now:

INVESTIGATOR *(sternly)* to boxing judge: Did anyone bribe you?

JUDGE *(startled)*: Why yes. I received $10,000 inside a Hallmark thank you card to score it for Mosley. How clever of you to ask. ■

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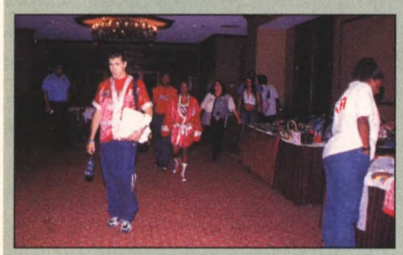
Tickets: For tickets, call 215-668-8619. Ticket packages vary. The $100 Presidential package includes a ringside seat, access to the Budweiser pre-party from 6 p.m.-8 p.m., which serves complimentary beverages and cigars, and access to the after-party. The $65 Platinum package includes the same amenities as the Presidential package, only the seating is farther from the ring. The $50 and $35 packages include seating, but no access to the prefight or postfight events.

Who to look out for: Each Augustine show has featured a who's who of Philadelphia sports figures, starting with Iverson and McNabb. Other pro athletes in attendance include Eagles offensive lineman Tra Thomas and 76ers guard Aaron McKie. Local Philly fighters mingle among the crowd, ranging from world middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins to rising prospects Anthony Thompson and Rasheem Brown.

Advice to greenhorns: All the celebrities are approachable, but it's usually not a good idea to try to gain their attention during the fights.



Fighters walk through the lobby on their way to the ring

The Adam's Mark stands out on City Avenue

By Joe Santoliquito

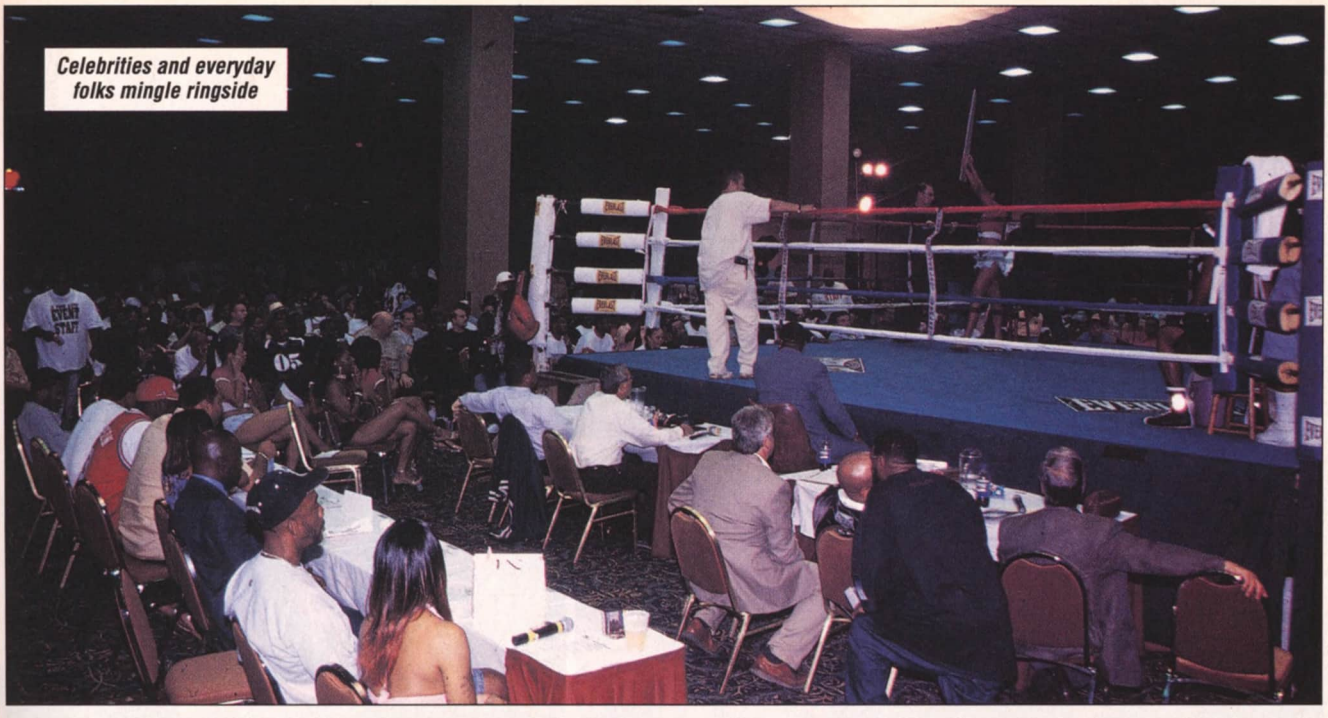
PHOTOS BY MARK W. HILL

P.J. Augustine was involved in the tow-truck business in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for eight years. It was a tough trade, competing with other tow-truck drivers, moving mangled heaps of metal, plus dealing with angry car owners whom he had to tow.

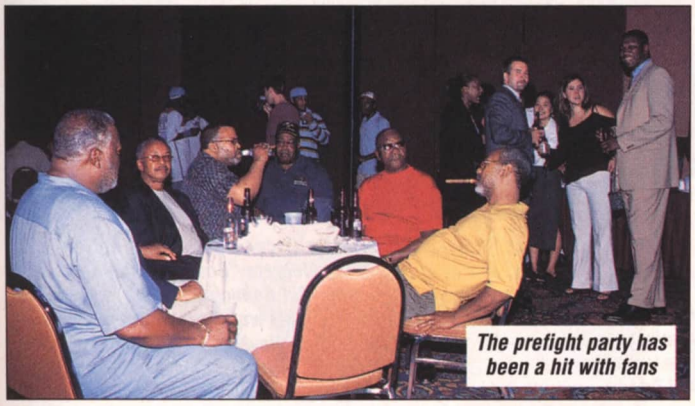
It was a few years ago that the now-34-year-old entrepreneur gave up the towing business to try and lug what many perceive as a mangled heap of a sport—boxing—into the modern era.

Running monthly cards out of Philadelphia's Adam's Mark Hotel, Augustine is regularly drawing 1,200 to 1,500 customers for what could be defined as club shows. Only Augustine has put on a different spin, making the shows more of an all-around entertainment package. Plus the environment is more upscale than your traditional clubfight venues, which are known for poor ventilation, paint peeling off the walls, and enough characters milling around to fill a circus.

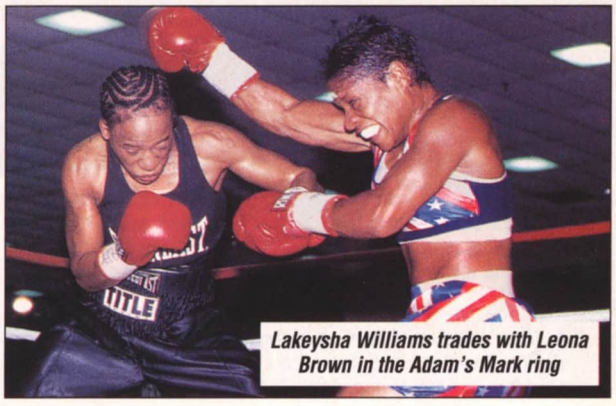
Augustine has turned a dream into a boxing reality at the Adam's Mark



Celebrities and everyday folks mingle ringside



The prefight party has been a hit with fans



Lakeysha Williams trades with Leona Brown in the Adam's Mark ring

"I wanted to bring the classy venue to boxing," said Augustine, who promotes a number of Philly fighters. "I knew some local fighters had chains on from the misery of the toughest game there is. I wanted to change all of that. One of my main goals was to make this a social setting. We want this to be about entertainment, with boxing as the centerpiece. I came here to show my fighters class, because the Adam's Mark has everything. It's not like fighting in a cave."

After a handful of shows, Augustine is breaking even financially, after losing close to $200,000 when he first started his boxing venture. But the shows are attracting good crowds and, more importantly, big-time sponsors like Pepsi and Budweiser.

Add to the mix local sports celebrities frequently found at ringside, such as 76ers superstar Allen Iverson and Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, and it's a nice night for a sports fan looking for fun.

Discombobulating Jones is M.C.

"I'll admit we took a chance when P.J. came to us," said Art Ransom, Philadelphia's geographic marketing representative for Budweiser. "P.J. had a lot of enthusiasm and commitment to what he was doing. Budweiser and boxing is a natural matchup, and we definitely like what we see. This has exceeded what we thought would happen."

One of the chief concerns for Tonya Newlin-Griffin, sales manager for the Adam's Mark, was that the hotel had never hosted a fight before, so management's learning curve worked parallel with Augustine's.

"We wanted something clean, someplace you can bring the family to," Newlin-Griffin said. "This is something different, because we can't offer the gambling that a casino can, pulling in high rollers. P.J. offers us the fight cards, we offer him the space, and we do everything else in-house."

Newlin-Griffin said she expects Augustin to someday outgrow the venue. But she's hopeful that the Adam's Mark will remain involved in boxing beyond that point, and will continue to put on some of the most entertaining and affordable boxing shows in Philly. ■

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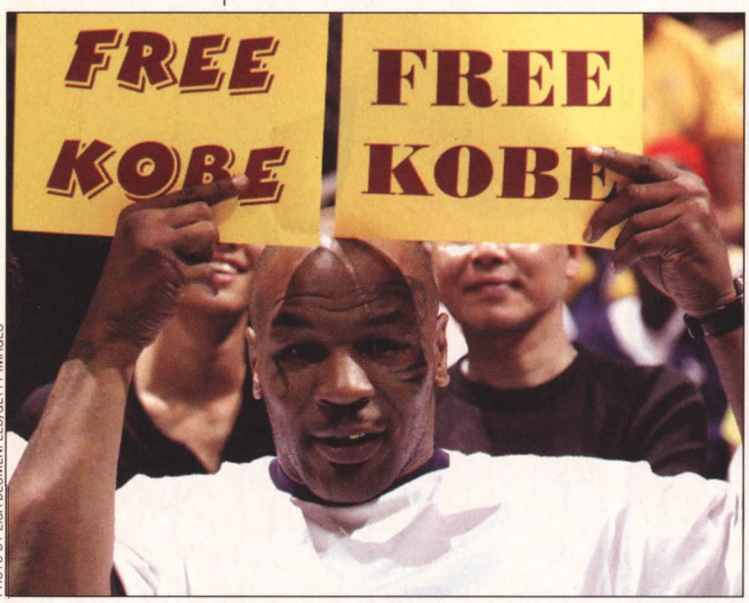

PHOTO BY LISA BLUMENFELD/GETTY IMAGES

Perhaps these signs would be more appropriate if and when Kobe Bryant actually goes to jail, but Mike Tyson's point is effectively conveyed anyhow. Actually, these were the tops to posters that "Iron Mike" ripped in half; the bottoms read "Bobble-Head Doll Day."

PHOTO BY FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES

Sugar Shane Mosley beats Oscar De La Hoya not once, but twice, and does he get to celebrate "Shane Mosley Day" at Los Angeles City Hall? Nooooo. But Councilman Nick Pacheco (center) and Mayor Jim Hahn (right) were more than happy to proclaim October 3 "Oscar De La Hoya Day" in tribute to boxing's "Golden Boy." What's next, "Adrian Stone Day," honoring the British journeyman for losing to Mosley as well?

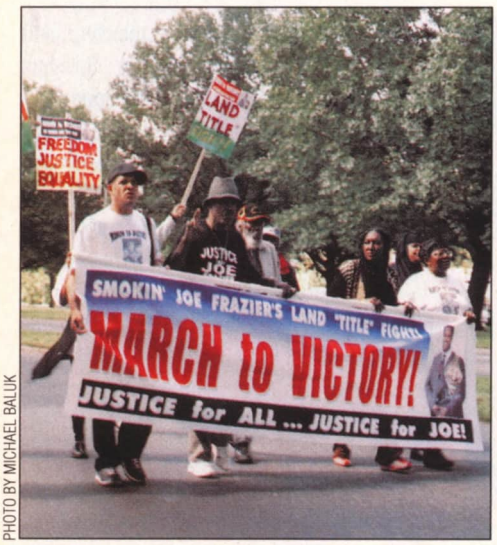

PHOTO BY MICHAEL BALUK

It's not quite the Million Man March, but Smokin' Joe Frazier managed to gather up a few friends to support him in his three-day rally against landowners who allegedly swindled him out of his farmland in the suburbs of Philadelphia. The former heavyweight champ is seeking $84-million, but so far, his fight is going about as well as his bouts with George Foreman.

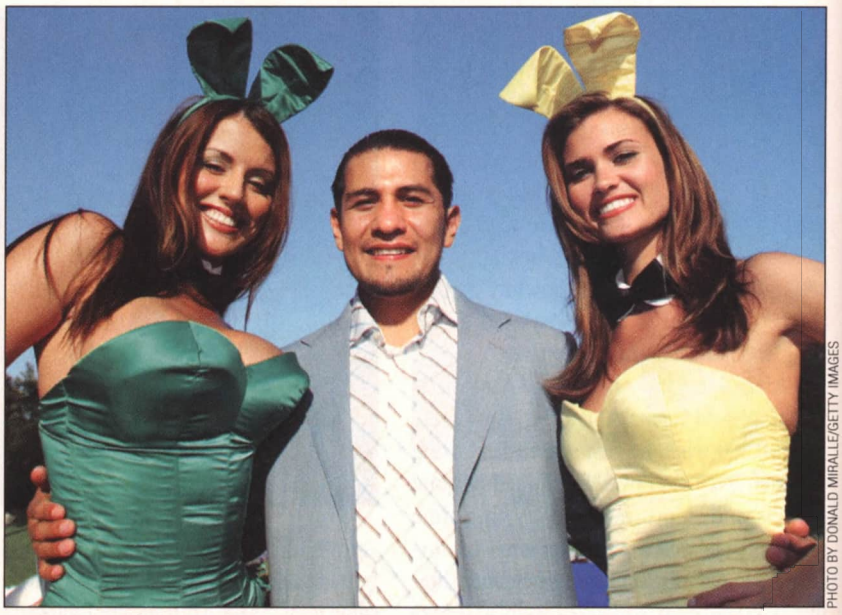

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Barrera and his bunnies: Featherweight world champ Marco Antonio Barrera may be happily married, but that doesn't mean he's going to pass up an opportunity to kick back with a couple of Playboy bunnies. By the way, is there anyone out there who wouldn't shell out $50 to see a cat fight between Barrera's two friends on pay-per-view?

PHOTO BY JEFF JULIAN

Undefeated welterweight Kermit Cintron isn't about to go calling himself "The Greatest" just yet, but he figured it couldn't hurt to let a little bit of Muhammad Ali's influence rub off on him by visiting Ali's famous Deer Lake, Pennsylvania, training camp. That's trainer Marshall Kauffman accompanying Cintron, hoping a hint of Angelo Dundee and Bundini Brown's magic rubs off on him.

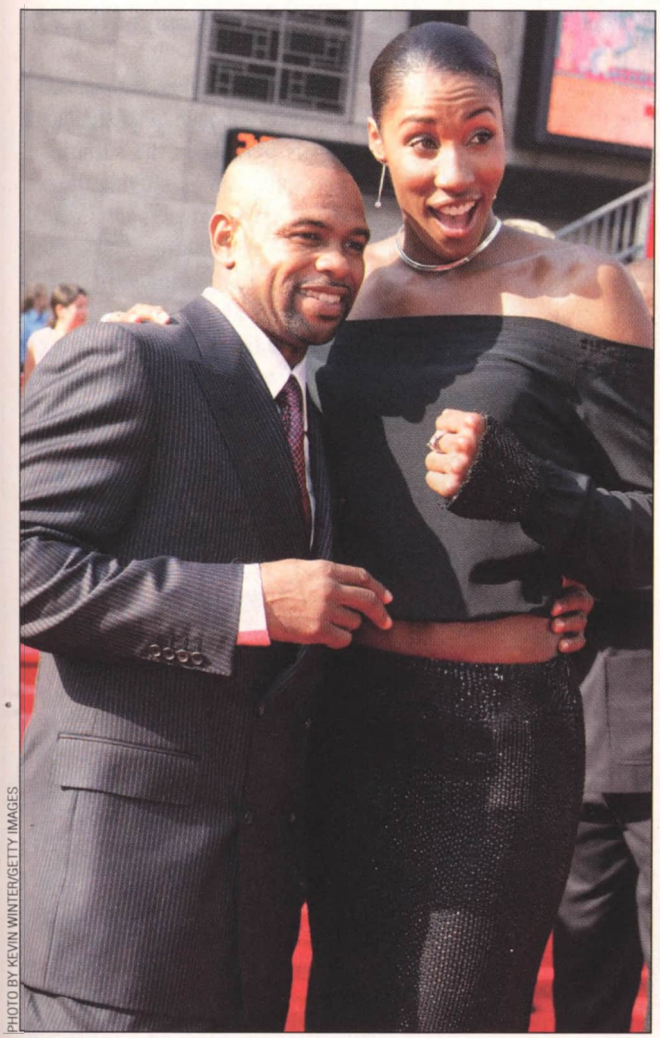

PHOTO BY KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

Pound-for-pound king Roy Jones and the queen of women's basketball, Lisa Leslie, met up at the 2003 ESPY Awards and did a heck of a job simulating the size difference we'd see if Jones stepped in the ring with Lennox Lewis. No truth to the rumor that Jones and Leslie hatched a plan for Roy to play in a WNBA game on the afternoon of his next fight.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN BYRNE

It's been more than two decades since Tommy Hearns posed for this famous cover of THE RING, but "The Hit Man" is still just as sharp a dresser as he was back then. Tommy has since retired his gun; let's hope he officially retires his other two guns sometime in the very near future.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Former featherweight champ Bat Battalino shows Ricardo Mayorga how a responsible athlete does it: First you win all your trophies, then you take up smoking after you've retired. In this photo from 1958, Battalino shows off his personal memorabilia collection after learning that he'd been inducted into the Connecticut Sports Hall of Fame.

NEW FACES

JESUS GONZALES

Junior Middleweight

By Joe Santoliquito

Jesus Gonzales saw everything he didn't want in life, living in that house on Van Buren Street. Armed men used to run down the dark adjacent alleyways. His parents put up wooden boards and brick inside the bedroom where Gonzales and his two brothers slept, afraid that bullets might come flying through the walls in the middle of the night.

Gonzales could swear the walls of that house were talking to him, urging him in whispers to "Get out, there's something better." So as the bedroom became more and more cramped with Gonzales' boxing trophies, a vision developed—one that would yank him from the squalor of central Phoenix, Arizona.

He lived in an environment where everyone started their life paths early. Teenage friends did drugs and became fathers and got stuck in dead-end jobs. But Gonzales could always count on his fists to make a better life for himself and his family, and he just needed to recall the house on Van Buren for motivation.

Five fights into his pro career, Gonzales, 5-0 (5), has already bought a palatial home for his parents in the suburbs of Phoenix, and he's living the better life he always envisioned. The frightening thing is that the 154-pounder is just 19 and already is one of the building blocks Top Rank is touting to ease the considerable void when the Las Vegas-based promotional company's top attraction, Oscar De La Hoya, eventually decides to retire.

(Continued on page 90)

PRO RECORD

2003

July 25	Sean Wilson, Phoenix, AZ	KO 1
Oct. 4	Joshua Peters, Los Angeles	KO 1
Oct. 10	Bobby Green, Tucson, AZ	KO 1
Oct. 17	Roy Smith, Phoenix	KO 1
Oct. 31	Craig Oxley, Phoenix	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
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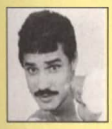

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★ Ken Buchanan
★ Danny "Little Red" Lopez
★ Angel Manfredy
★ Terry Norris
★ Jeff Fenech
★ Pipino Cuevas
★ Nino Benvenuti
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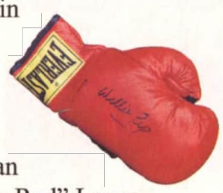
★ Paulie Ayala
★ Ricardo "Finito" Lopez
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Livingstone Bramble
★ Donald Curry
★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee



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THE NEW BREED HEAVYWEIGHTS

Who Will Replace LEWIS, TYSON, & HOLYFIELD?

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

By Bernard Fernandez

Tim Witherspoon … Greg Page … Bonecrusher Smith … Tony Tubbs … Pinklon Thomas … Michael Dokes … Gerrie Coetzee … Mike Weaver … Trevor Berbick.

Some of those who held alphabet-soup versions of the heavyweight championship during the 1980s had varying degrees of talent, but it was difficult to detect through the maze of warts and flaws that largely served to obscure their careers. For the most part, the performers in the decade's heavyweight circus labored as midway carnies while Larry Holmes commanded center ring under the big top.

The less flamboyant Holmes wasn't quite the Greatest Show on Earth, as his primary predecessor, Muhammad Ali, had been, but no one ever confused "The Easton Assassin" with the guy trailing the elephants with a pooper-scooper.

They say that what goes around, comes around. Must be true. After Joe Mesi, 27-0 (25), had raised his profile somewhat with an HBO-televised one-round blowout of DaVarryl Williamson, father-manager Jack Mesi hinted at the sort of lowered expectations for the upcoming generation of heavyweights that darkened much of the '80s.

"Joe doesn't have to be one of the best of all-time," Jack Mesi said, anticipating a share of the title he believes ultimately will fall to his son. "He only needs to be one of the best of *this* time."

With the longtime Big Three of Lennox Lewis, Mike Tyson, and Evander Holyfield aging and moving (or being pushed) toward the exit, concerns again have been raised that boxing's glamour division may have to settle for sideshow status. But this time, instead of a Big Three, or even a Big One, there may be a Big None.

"The heavyweight division is in the most trouble it's been in in a long, long time," said Showtime analyst Al Bernstein. "There always has been less depth at heavyweight than the other divisions, but now I think the gap is even more pronounced."

Seconded ESPN's Teddy Atlas: "With this kind of landscape, you can play musical chairs. That's what happened with those guys in the '80s. It wasn't so much what was there; a lot of it had to do with what wasn't there. I look

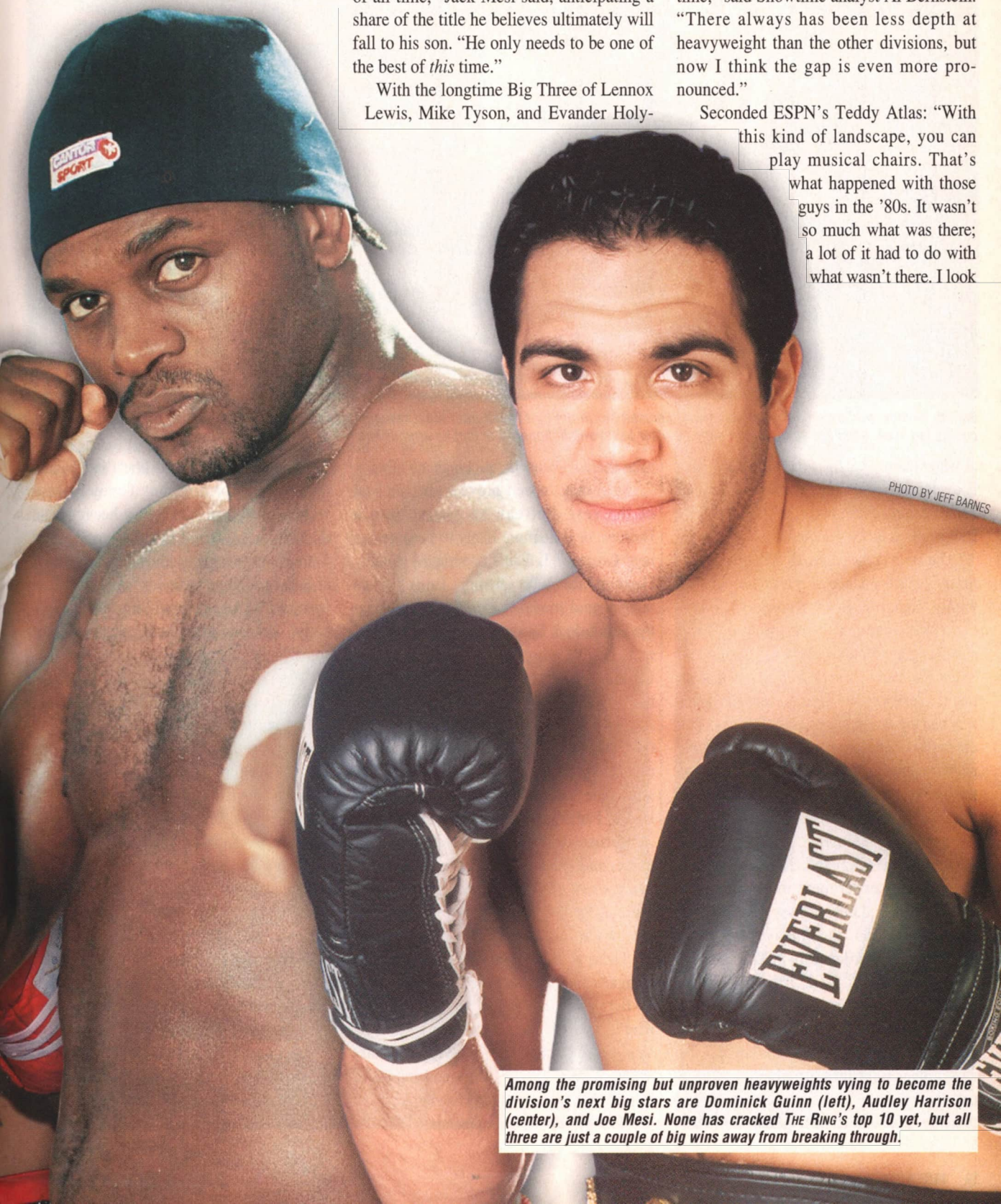

PHOTO BY JEFF BARNES

Among the promising but unproven heavyweights vying to become the division's next big stars are Dominick Guinn (left), Audley Harrison (center), and Joe Mesi. None has cracked THE RING's top 10 yet, but all three are just a couple of big wins away from breaking through.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Buffalo fans go wild as DaVarryl Williamson is counted out in the first round after Mesi ravaged him with a two-fisted attack, topped off by a fight-ending left hook. Mesi has an important edge on other heavyweight hopefuls in that he already has the ability to attract large crowds.

at who's coming along and I don't see anybody capable of shaking up the division like Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson did. Everybody is lacking something."

The next generation of heavyweights, many of whom are restless but not so young anymore, do not feature a single can't-miss candidate for entry into the shrinking superstars' club. Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko? Corrie Sanders took a lot of the shine off the former, and the latter still has the ignominy of a quit-on-his-stool defeat, his courageous effort against Lewis notwithstanding. Chris Byrd? Nice guy, terrific defensive fighter, but the power of a utility infielder. David Tua? Big punch, but a plodder susceptible to being outmaneuvered and outboxed. Roy Jones? His heavyweight experiment might just be a one-and-done. James Toney? Clever and skillful, but 35 and an overfed middleweight camouflaged in XXL clothing. Hasim Rahman? Kirk Johnson? John Ruiz? Surely you jest.

So, like grand masters in chess whose minds are programmed to see beyond the next move, fight fans are obliged to gaze past the usual suspects to those who constitute the next-to-the-next generation. But even there it seems the pickings are slim.

Mesi may indeed prove to be the best of the rest, but can he evolve into a Holmes, or is he more likely to become our next Coetzee? Is British southpaw Audley Harrison, the 2000 Olympic super heavyweight gold medalist, destined to pick up the Union Jack Lewis must soon lay down, or is he just a hot Tubbs? Can Dominick Guinn, 23-0 (17), succeed Holyfield, or merely take the place of Michael Grant? And is Calvin Brock going to be memorable for anything he achieves in the ring, or vaguely remembered only because he shares the same last name as base-stealing Hall of Fame outfielder Lou Brock?

Bernstein, Atlas, and Hall of Fame trainer and HBO analyst Emanuel Steward, like the rest of us, have been scanning the horizon for the next heavyweight savior, but they're not sure he yet walks among us. There is no consensus even as far as a stopgap candidate is concerned.

Bernstein casts a shaky vote for Toney, who is a candidate for 2003 Fighter of the Year based on his victories over IBF cruiserweight king Vassiliy Jirov and four-time former heavyweight titlist Holyfield.

"Let's face it, 217 pounds (Toney's weight for the Holyfield bout) is a ridiculous weight for him, but Toney made it work," Bernstein said. "In a heavyweight division that is bereft of really good talent, Toney, who's a guy with skills and a better chin than anyone gave him credit for, can be a factor. And he's willing to fight anybody, which is more than can be said for some of the other so-called contenders.

"As I see it, Toney is the wild card. His performance against Holyfield—even if everyone concedes that Evander is well past his prime—was enlightening. In the first round, Holyfield did some good things. Over the first three or four rounds even, Holyfield hit Toney with some very good heavyweight punches. Now, is Evander a George Foreman or Earnie Shavers type of puncher? No, but he's hurt and knocked out a lot of very good heavyweights, and power is the last thing you lose as you get older. Toney took those punches and he took them well. He made me believe he can compete at a high level as a heavyweight. With the exception of Lennox Lewis on a good day, I can't think of even one heavyweight who Toney wouldn't at least have a chance to beat."

Steward hasn't purchased the round-

Guinn, known as "The Southern Disaster," has made the most out of his two HBO appearances, blasting out Michael Grant in seven rounds (above) and winning a hard-fought decision over Duncan Dokiwari (below), who outweighed him by more than 18 pounds.

trip ticket, but he is still an excursion rider on the half-filled Wladimir Klitschko bandwagon.

"Of the current fighters out there, I think the guy with the best chance may be Wladimir Klitschko," Steward said. "He has a lot of talent, but he has to overcome the negativity of being knocked out by Corrie Sanders, like Lennox had to overcome being knocked out by Oliver McCall. If he stays with it and doesn't drop back again, I believe Wladimir can become a strong force over the next two or three years."

Atlas likes ... well, nobody so strongly that he is willing to issue no-strings endorsements, but he likes this and that about some of the wannabes. It could come

PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Harrison spears Matthew Ellis with a right en route to a second-round knockout. It was Harrison's last fight in England before moving his campaign to the United States, where he had already tallied two more quick wins prior to this magazine going to press.

down to somebody stepping up and seizing the opportunity that obviously is there for anyone capable enough of rising above his present circumstances.

"I didn't see tremendous improvement for Dominick Guinn in the Michael Grant fight (Grant, trained by Atlas, was stopped in seven rounds in June) because Michael wasn't competitive that night," Atlas offered. "Guinn still showed himself to be vulnerable. But against Duncan Dokiwari, I did see tremendous improvement. He was like a transformed guy. He was much better technically, much more together. And he did that against a pretty strong and durable guy in Dokiwari. Based on that fight, there's reason to hope Guinn can continue to develop. It's a process, and the way Guinn handled it impressed me.

"Audley Harrison is another guy who is kind of intriguing. He hasn't fought anyone at all, and he's getting to a point where he has to fight someone who isn't guaranteed to lose. You can't move forward if all you're fighting is setup types. After a while, you start to stagnate. But he does have that Olympic gold medal, and his size, his mobility, and his being a southpaw, that all jumps out at you. He also has the advantage of being from a different country so he has a chance for that national-hero thing. They don't have Michael Jordan and Barry Bonds in England. They don't have the Yankees. A guy like that, he comes here with the exaggerated buildup, and that can be advantageous in a way."

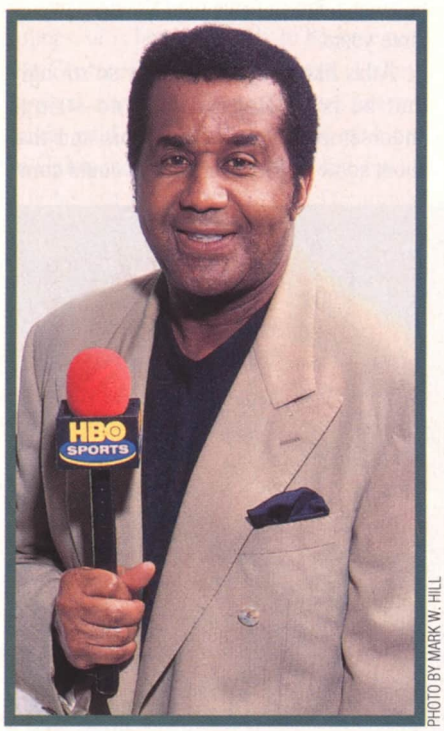

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Emanuel Steward, who trains current champ Lennox Lewis, still thinks Wladimir Klitschko could represent the future of the division if he can bounce back from an unexpected kayo loss the way a young Lewis did.

Atlas is not a soccer guy, so let us forgive him for his lack of familiarity with, say, David Beckham and Manchester United. He might have mentioned the Beatles, at the forefront of a 1960s musical British invasion, but you get the idea. Audley Harrison, 13-0 (9), is not as big yet as George Harrison and the rest of the Fab Four, but maybe, in time, he can be bigger than Frank Bruno, sort of a pugilistic Herman's Hermits. One never knows about these things.

Which brings us to Mesi, who represents both sides of a familiar coin. Mesi is Buffalo's franchise fighter, a proven draw in western New York, and that provides him with a constituency that could be built upon. But is that popularity based in part

on his skin color (white), or on the belief that he can fight?

Bernstein believes Mesi is more legitimate than one previous white hope, Duane Bobick, but he said it remains to be seen if he can fill the footsteps of Gerry Cooney, Jerry Quarry, and Tommy Morrison, all of whom made nice livings but failed to step all the way up to the top plateau.

"Those guys were pretty good in their own right and had something to offer," Bernstein said. "I'm not sure if Mesi is at that level yet. Cooney was physically powerful, but emotionally fragile. Quarry happened to be there at the same time that Ali, Joe Frazier, and George Foreman were blocking his path. If either one of those guys were around today, they'd almost certainly be champions."

Atlas, however, is reserving judgment on Mesi. He said the quickie demolition of Williamson proved nothing, and Mesi's upcoming bout with another fringe type, Monte Barrett, might not, either.

"I have doubts about Mesi," Atlas said. "He's done what's been asked of him; you can't knock him for that. But he's been in there with guys who have been set up for him like so many pins for a bowling ball. He's starting to get recognition you usually don't get until you've been down a tougher road.

"I'm not sure all the questions will be answered by what he does against Barrett, but it is one more rung up the ladder. It's another way of finding out if what we're dealing with can be something more than an illusion, something more than just well-managed hype."

None of those surveyed—Atlas, Steward, Bernstein—rated Brock even as highly as Guinn, Mesi, and Harrison, but they did not reject him out of hand. Philadelphia's Malik Scott also was mentioned as at least an outside possibility for a breakthrough.

"Calvin Brock can fit in with those other guys," Atlas said. "He has a good amateur background, which will allow him to survive certain things. I don't know that he has the physical talent that some of these other guys have. He's someone who sort of got lost in the mix because he didn't have a good performance in the 2000 Olympics. The knock on him is that he hasn't always been in the best shape. But he can find his niche somewhere."

Steward said the greater concern is not who might or might not be ready to contend in the foreseeable future, but whether the division that spawned Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, and Ali even has a future to speak of. Like petroleum reserves, truly outstanding heavyweights might qualify as a perishable commodity.

"All the kids, after they get to about 5'10" and 180 pounds, want to become football or basketball players," Steward said. "They mainly go by what they see on TV, and what they see the most on TV is the NFL and the NBA. Football and basketball players make millions, so becoming one is every kid's dream now.

"In a way, it's a trend that's killing our amateur programs. Smaller kids, Hispanic kids, they still go into boxing. The bigger kids don't dream about becoming heavyweight champion of the world so much. They're not giving boxing a try.

"Olympic boxing on TV used to be what football and basketball is now. It was on in prime time. Sugar Ray Leonard and Oscar De La Hoya were superstars before they even turned pro because of TV exposure. Now, you hardly ever see Olympic boxing at a reasonable hour. They run it on taped delay at three in the morning. The best prospects at the Kronk Gym now are 130-pound Mexican kids who want to be the next De La Hoya, the next Marco Antonio Barrera. That's pretty much a reflection of what's going on all throughout America now."

So what is the solution? What can again heighten interest in a heavyweight division facing perhaps its most severe crisis ever?

"For a superstar to come along," Steward said. "Just one. That's all it takes. Say what you want about him, but Tyson had the biggest influence on boxing, of causing kids to go into boxing again, of anyone since Ali. I mean, look at Tiger Woods. How many kids are taking up golf because of him? We need a Tyson. We need a Tiger Woods." ■

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Although not as well-known as Guinn, Mesi, and Harrison, 2000 U.S. Olympian Calvin Brock (pictured) was mentioned by several of the experts interviewed for this story as another possible heavyweight hope for the future. Brock has won 17 straight as a pro, 15 by kayo, though the opposition has been limited.

Bernard Fernandez covers boxing for the Philadelphia Daily News and is president of the Boxing Writers Association of America.

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July 1983: Michael Dokes: How He Can Restore The Decayed WBA Title. Also: Torres, Burns, young heavyweights, Patterson-Johansson, Pryor-Armstrong dream fight.

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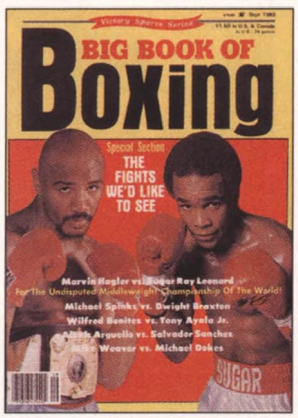

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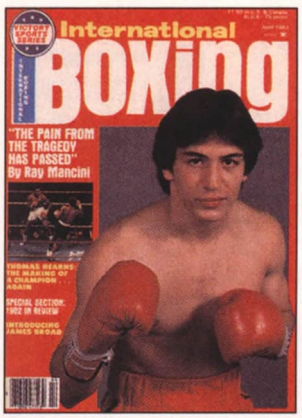

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The RING PREDICTS ... WHAT'S AHEAD FOR 2004

Section Compiled by Nigel Collins, Eric Raskin, Joe Santoliquito & William Dettloff

Trying to predict the future is always fraught with pitfalls, but when applied to boxing, prognostication becomes a minefield strewn with false assumptions and faulty forecasts. But that's not going to stop THE RING *from dusting off the crystal ball for the third year in a row and attempting to foretell what is going to transpire in the upcoming year.*

Part of the fun in doing this sort of section is looking back at last year and seeing where we were right, where we screwed up, and what can be done to improve our prophecy percentage.

Last year we selected five up-and-comers to become breakthrough stars in 2003—Nate Campbell, Kermit Cintron, Miguel Cotto, Kelly Pavlik, and Brian Viloria. And while all are still in the race, only Cotto came close to breaking out in '03, and even he has yet to become a huge star outside of his native Puerto Rico. The lesson to be learned here is that it frequently takes more than 12 months to transform a hot prospect into a star. But not always; as the previously obscure Ricardo Mayorga proved, it can just be a matter of picking the right fighters.

As in the past, we were closer to the mark in the "10 Burning Questions" segment than the others, providing correct answers to eight of 10 questions posed. Actually, we couldn't be happier about one of our incorrect answers—the one that predicted that boxing would not *return to network television. It did, on NBC, and will continue to do so in '04.*

Sadly, only four of the 10 fights we wanted to see in '03 actually took place—Roy Jones-John Ruiz, Laila Ali-Christy Martin, Rafael Marquez-Tim Austin, and Miguel Barrera-Roberto Leyva III. But that's okay, as that slice of the prophecy pie is more craving than calculation, anyway.

Last year, Oscar De La Hoya got the most votes from the panel of experts recruited to predict who would be Fighter of the Year in '03, a speculation that Shane Mosley has already shot down. In fact, the '03 race is so tight, we won't know the winner until mid-December, making it even tougher for this year's panel to pick next year's winner.

But regardless of whether folks are stunned by the brilliance of our guesswork or bent doubled with laughter at the folly of it all, a fun read is virtually guaranteed.

The RING PREDICTS ...

10 Fights We'd Like To See In 2004

We can hope for many things for boxing in 2004. We can hope for more TV dates, not only because you can never have too much boxing on television, but also because we're sick of all the promoters crying that they can't get their guys on TV anymore. On a related note, we can hope for a reversal of the recent and potentially disastrous trend of putting mediocre fights on pay-per-view, a medium that once was reserved just for the superfights. (Are you listening, HBO and Showtime?) We can hope that Jose Sulaiman and the rest of his henchmen at the WBC will remember that they're bankrupt, or about to be, and start acting like it. We can hope for better matchups on Friday Night Fights. *We can hope that another big star or two comes along because you can never have too many of those, and we can hope Mike Tyson finally finds some peace, not to mention some of that $300-million he burned through.*

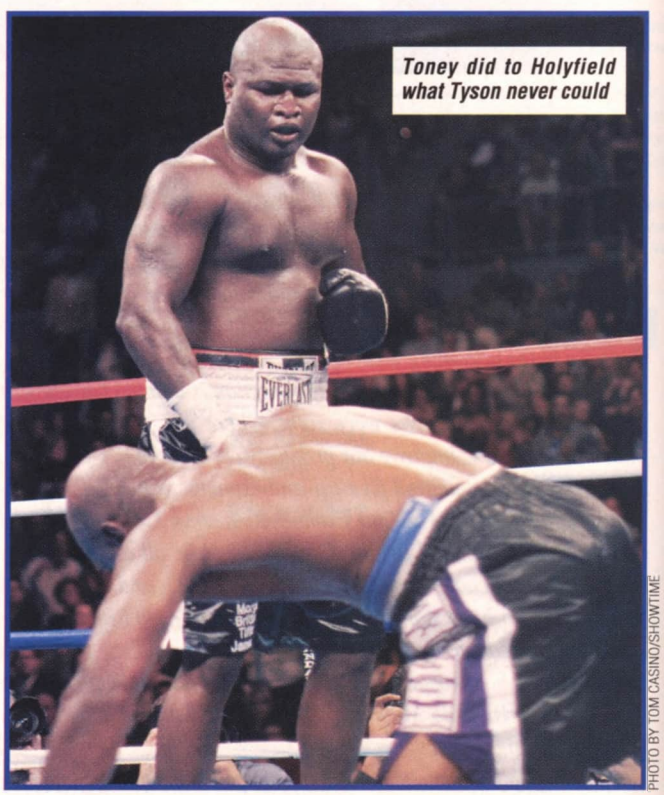
But, alas, this is boxing. We can and do hope for many things, but we've learned from experience that about the only wishes we can make that have a reasonable chance of coming true are those that involve the actual fights themselves. So we're doing it again. What follows is our annual list of 10 fights we'd like to see in the coming year. A note before you dive in: As always, we are loathe to include in this section fighters who have big fights coming up after our press deadline and before this issue hits your newsstands. As circumstance would have it, many marquee fighters are doing business in precisely that window. That will account for why several stars' names don't appear on these pages. It's okay; though it's often the marquee guys that make the news, it's the regular fighters that give us hope.

JAMES TONEY-MIKE TYSON

Why We'd Like To See It: Toney is a legitimate bad ass. He wouldn't be a bit intimidated by Tyson, despite the size difference. Tyson is just as real; remember, in three of his four losses, he stood there and took his beating like a man right up until the moment he got stretched. He is all fighter. If you're going to beat Tyson, you have to beat him up—bad. Toney has the confidence to stand right there and try.

Who Would Win And Why: It's almost inconceivable that a former middleweight would beat the Tyson we used to know, but this isn't the Tyson we used to know and Toney isn't your average blown-up middleweight. Tyson is less disciplined in the ring now than he's ever been, and Toney is too slick and too good defensively to get caught with wild punches. By the middle rounds he'd be having fun and late he'd have Tyson in all kinds of trouble. Toney by late stoppage.

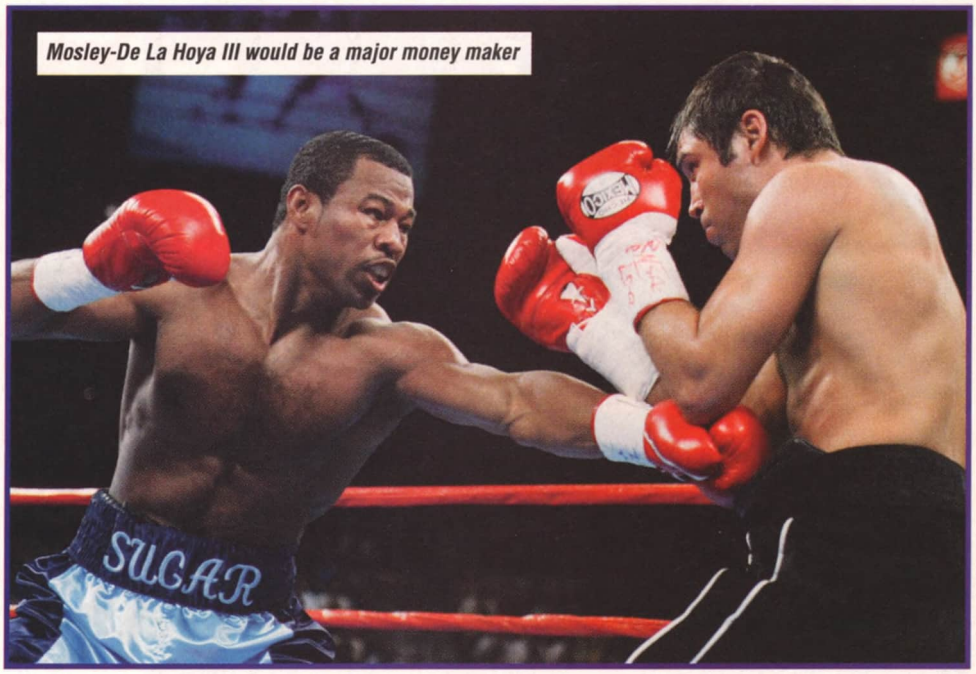
Chances Of It Happening: You never know what to expect with Tyson. One minute he's getting ready for Oleg Maskaev, the next for a kickboxer. Still, at this stage of his career, he wants to take the biggest money fights against guys who he feels have the least chance of hurting him—that opens the door for such "little" guys as Roy Jones and Toney. Jones probably has a better chance of landing the fight, but with Tyson you never know.



Toney did to Holyfield what Tyson never could

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

OSCAR DE LA HOYA-SHANE MOSLEY III



Mosley-De La Hoya III would be a major money maker

Why We'd Like To See It: This is a no-brainer. The first fight produced a clear winner in a close, competitive fight. The sequel spawned another close fight in which the majority of fans (though not the majority of media) thought De La Hoya won convincingly. Allowing this wonderful series to end here would be a travesty.

Who Would Win And Why: De La Hoya fought about as well as he could in the second fight. He probably couldn't do it any better. He lost. Conversely, Mosley did not fight a great fight, and yet in the eyes of many, including the judges, he won anyway. He's stronger than De La Hoya, faster, and better down the stretch. Plus, he can be better next time. We don't think De La Hoya can. Call it another close win for Mosley.

Chances Of It Happening: Despite the money that would be available, it's unlikely these two will renew hostilities in 2004. There are a lot of good fights out there to be made between 147 and 160 pounds. The guess here is that both Mosley and De La Hoya will avail themselves of a few of those matches before getting together again, probably in '05.

JOE CALZAGHE-SVEN OTTKE

Why We'd Like to See It: Wouldn't it be nice to know, finally, which of these guys is the best super middleweight in the world? We've been going back and forth for years: Ottke beats Charles Brewer and we think it's him; Calzaghe beats him a little better so we jump over there. Forget the back-and-forth already. There's only one sure way to know.

Who Would Win And Why: A couple of years ago we might have picked Ottke based on his superior skills and amateur background, but no more. His last three fights as of our press deadline—close decision wins over Byron Mitchell, David Starie, and Mads Larsen—were harder than we would have expected. We think he's slipping. Calzaghe is better and hungrier than any of those guys, and his fast hands and combination punching would wear out Ottke down the stretch. Calzaghe by decision.

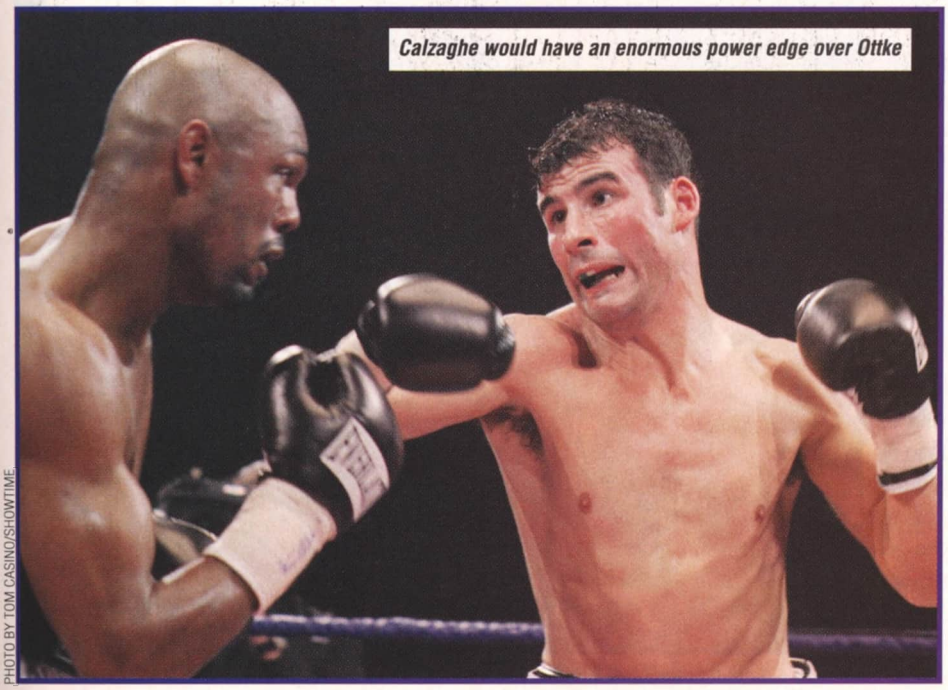

Calzaghe would have an enormous power edge over Ottke

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Chances Of It Happening: Don't count on it. By design or something else, neither guy has shown any great inclination to engage in very big fights, so it's doubtful they would do it now. Plus, Calzaghe is talking of moving to 175, and while it's conceivable that Ottke might want to get in one good payday before he calls it quits, it's more likely he rides it out until the end in Germany. What a shame.

Based on the Vanderpool fight, Vargas could be in trouble against Wright

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

FERNANDO VARGAS-WINKY WRIGHT II

Why We'd Like To See It: Right off the bat: The first meeting was a heck of a good prize fight. And even if you think, as we do, that Vargas pulled it out at the end, the decision was close enough to merit debate. Also, Wright hasn't had a big fight since, and even if some of that is of his own doing—remember, he priced himself out of a date with Shane Mosley a couple of years ago—who wouldn't like to see him get a good payday?

Who Would Win And Why: You would have thought going in that Vargas could at least look good against Fitz Vanderpool. He didn't. He looked vulnerable, and that fuels speculation that knockout losses to Felix Trinidad and Oscar De La Hoya damaged him irrevocably. Damaged is not what you want to be going in against Wright, who, though bland and lacking a big punch, is one of the best mechanics in the business. Wright gets revenge, by unanimous decision or late stoppage.

Chances Of It Happening: The odds are against it. It makes more sense for Vargas to take a less skillful guy like Javier Castillejo or maybe Daniel Santos, and then try for another jackpot with De La Hoya. We guess it's conceivable that he goes after Wright to try to get the IBF belt back, but there's a lot more money in a rematch with De La Hoya. If you were his manager, what would you do?

ARTURO GATTI-RICKY HATTON

Why We'd Like To See It: You can see how this might go. You can see that if Hatton is as tough and as willing as he seems to be, this could end up as Gatti-Ward IV, and wouldn't that be something? No, Hatton doesn't have Ward's pop, and we don't know if he has Ward's chin, but if he does and if he could force Gatti to fight him, it would be just like old times. Plus, he's much fresher than Ward was. Imagine the fireworks.

Who Would Win And Why: Hatton sure looked like the real thing against a shopworn Vince Phillips, his only reasonable test so far, but it would be asking a lot of him to beat Gatti—at least the version that more or less schooled Ward in their second and third fights. Gatti controls Hatton with his legs and his jab and, only when he feels like it, he stands still and trades. He wins that battle, too. Gatti by decision in a corker.

Chances Of It Happening: The odds are against it. Hatton's people still apparently aren't comfortable with letting him fight a top-10 guy, despite his obvious promise. He's likely to spend 2004 in Great Britain still teeing off on top-20 types. You get the sense Gatti would take the fight provided it paid enough, but remember that he just signed a multifight contract with HBO, and Hatton fights on Showtime. It's not impossible that this fight gets made in '04, but it's a longshot.

Could Hatton be Gatti's new Ward?

Lazcano, like Castillo, proved himself by beating Johnston

JOSE LUIS CASTILLO-JUAN LAZCANO

Why We'd Like To See It: Lazcano's stoppage of Steve Johnston underneath Mosley-De La Hoya II made it clear that he is a real threat at lightweight. Castillo, of course, is recognized by most as the second-best 135-pounder alive, and anyone who doesn't recognize Castillo as such probably considers Lazcano to be the second-best lightweight instead. What could be more natural than having them get together?

Who Would Win And Why: The central question is, would Castillo be able to get close enough to Lazcano to do damage, or would Lazcano's long arms and heavy hands keep Castillo on the outside, where he is much less effective? The sense here is that Castillo would find a way inside Lazcano's reach and make it entirely an inside fight. That's Castillo's game. He's better at it than Lazcano is, and he's probably stronger. Castillo by decision in a slugfest.

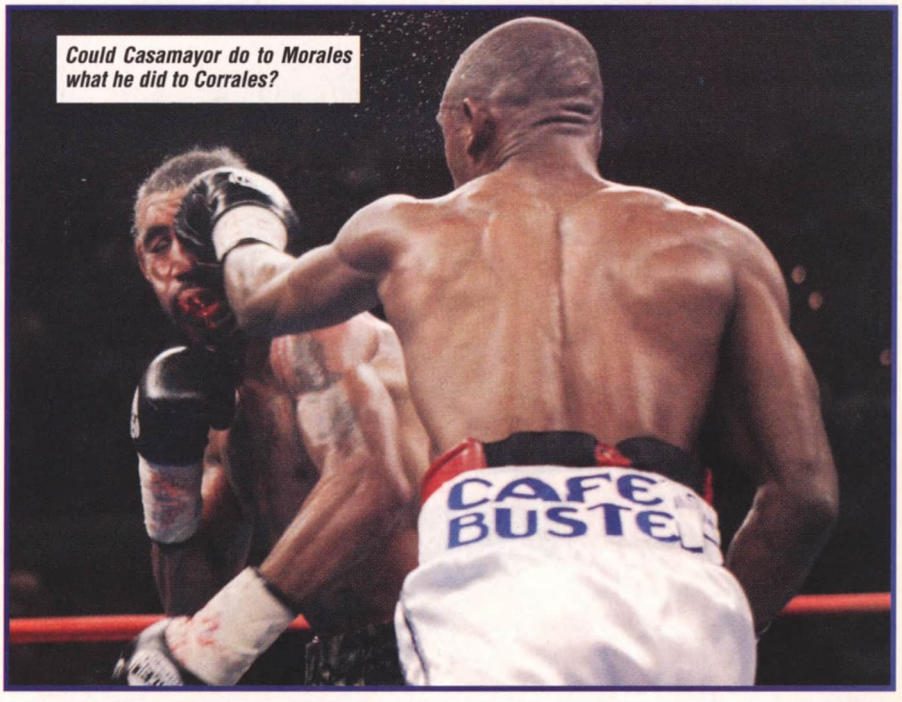
Chances Of It Happening: This one could happen. Floyd Mayweather continues to talk of moving up to 140. At this writing, Lazcano and Castillo are rated numbers one and three by the WBC, respectively, and numbers one and two, respectively, by THE RING, and if Mayweather jumps to junior welterweight, they'll meet to determine his successor.

ERIK MORALES-JOEL CASAMAYOR

Why We'd Like To See It: Morales' entrance at 130 pounds adds a whole new dimension to the junior lightweight division. He is a legitimate star. Meanwhile, Casamayor's inspired win over bomb-throwing Diego Corrales makes him the incumbent at 130—especially if Acelino Freitas goes ahead and departs the division. If Morales wants to be the man at junior lightweight, he has to go through Casamayor.

Who Would Win And Why: If we were talking about the Morales who struggled against In Jin Chi or Guty Espadas in their first fight, we'd pick Casamayor in a walkover. But we're not. We're talking about the Morales who bludgeoned Paulie Ayala and Bobby Boy Velardez and then pancaked Espadas in their rematch. That Morales is brilliant, and he stops Casamayor late in a tactical thriller.

Chances Of It Happening: If Bob Arum is willing to put Morales in tough, then we could see a superfight at 130 pounds. It's almost certain, however, that he'll go after Jesus Chavez and Carlos Hernandez first. But neither of those fights is as appealing as Morales-Casamayor. And if fan demand is high enough, it's not inconceivable that Arum could put Morales in with the Cuban around the end of the year. Warrior that he is, Morales certainly wouldn't object.



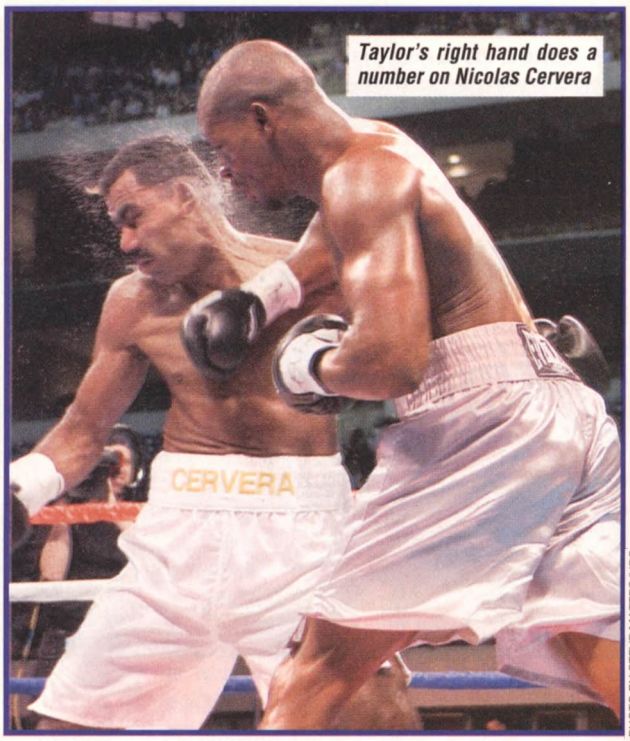
Could Casamayor do to Morales what he did to Corrales?

ROCKY JUAREZ-JOHNNY TAPIA

Why We'd Like To See It: This is the classic crossroads matchup between a veteran and a rising youngster. Tapia is at or near the end of a long, hard career. He has all the experience and knowledge he'll ever need, but the body is wearing out. Conversely, Juarez is young and fresh and talented and awfully skilled, but lacks big-fight or even upper-tier experience.

Who Would Win And Why: Only part of the answer depends on how much Tapia has left. It's equally as important that Juarez is a natural featherweight. Tapia is a featherweight only because he's older and because there's more money there than at junior feather or bantam. If Tapia were in his prime, his speed and experience would overcome Juarez' strength and youth. Now we're not so sure. Call it Juarez by decision in a heartbreaker.

Chances Of It Happening: There's a decent shot. Consider: Tapia already had his chance at Marco Antonio Barrera. It was a mismatch. He's not in a position to get a title fight against anyone. He needs a win over a notable guy. Juarez fits the bill. The question is whether Juarez' people would risk it. Timing is everything. And the time just might be right.



Taylor's right hand does a number on Nicolas Cervera

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

After beating guys like Antonio Diaz, Juarez may be ready for Tapia

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Marquez handled the smaller Pastrana, but is he ready for the larger Ayala?

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

JERMAIN TAYLOR-JEFF LACY

Why We'd Like To See It: Talk about a pair of evenly matched prospects. Both guys are young, undefeated, and from the same Olympic team. Both are big punchers. Both are well-connected and technically sound. Both are being moved well by shrewd promoters. Aside from the fact that Lacy is naturally bigger—he's a solid super middleweight, while Taylor is comfortable at 160—you couldn't ask for a better matchup.

Who Would Win And Why: It's tempting to call this a simple matter of Lacy's left hook against Taylor's right hand. In that analysis, Lacy wins. But Taylor is a better boxer and a straighter puncher, while, as Richard Grant showed, a steady jab and movement can blunt some of Lacy's power. The boxer beats the puncher. Taylor jabs, moves enough to keep Lacy off-balance, and blocks his left hooks on the way to a unanimous decision.

Chances Of It Happening: This fight will happen, just not in 2004. It will happen some time after, either as a very big fight or, if one guy should go drastically bad all of the sudden, as a trophy fight for the other. Either way, from a manager's perspective, it's too potentially lucrative a fight to do now, when they're both so young and undefeated and beltless.

PAULIE AYALA-RAFAEL MARQUEZ

Why We'd Like To See It: Forget that Ayala is a counter-puncher by nature and that Marquez, given the right opponent, can be one, too. Both guys love to put their heads in there and wing punches—a lot of them. This would have Fight of the Year potential. What more could you ask for?

Who Would Win And Why: Even though he's the smaller guy, Marquez is the bigger puncher here, and not by a little. But isn't that always the case with Ayala? Just about every guy he fights has a bigger punch, and then Ayala outworks him, outfights him, and, eventually, outscores him. He's a little too experienced for Marquez right now, even if Marquez was excellent against previously unbeaten veteran Tim Austin. Ayala by close decision in one of the best lower-weight fights you'd ever see.

Chances Of It Happening: While it's not out of the question, it's hard to see what Marquez would gain by going up in weight and facing one of the game's toughest little fighters. Even though Ayala's searching desperately for an attractive opponent, there's plenty of business for Marquez to take care of at bantamweight. So don't get your hopes up. ■

The RING PREDICTS ...

EXPERTS' POLL: Who Will Be The Fighter Of The Year In 2004?

GRAHAM HOUSTON (*Boxing Monthly* American editor): "I think Miguel Cotto has a shot at being Fighter of the Year for 2004. He seems to have the pedigree, the staying power, the smarts, the dedication, and the promotional backing. There are more exciting fighters, bigger punchers, and bigger names, but there is a good chance a lot of them will lose in the next 12 months. Cotto will, I think, keep winning in his steady way and by the end of 2004 will be featured in a big, breakthrough type of fight that he might very well win."

FRANZ LIDZ (*Sports Illustrated* boxing writer): "I can see the awesomely awkward Vitali Klitschko willing himself to a heavyweight title. He's not the best heavyweight out there, but next year, I think he would have the opportunity again to fight for someone's heavyweight belt, based on his performance against Lennox Lewis."

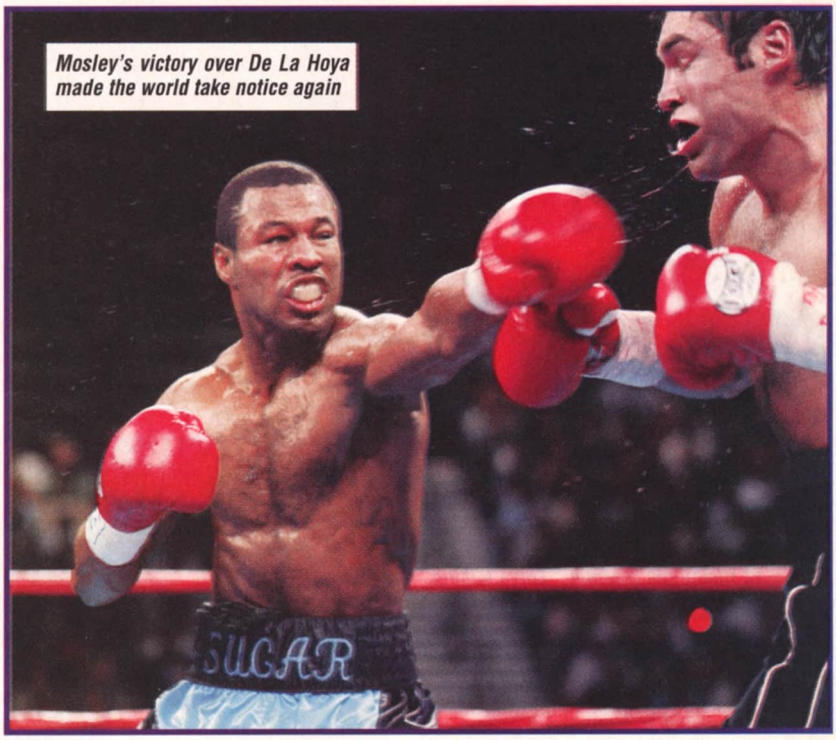
Mayorga, who beat Forrest twice in '03, is some of the experts' choice for '04

CARLOS ARIAS (*Orange County Register* boxing writer): "My early leaning is toward Erik Morales, based on the fact that he has a lot of big fights coming up in 2004. I can see how he'd be able to become Fighter of the Year very easily. We're talking three big fights. Morales will have Carlos Hernandez, following Jesus Chavez, and then in September either Acelino Freitas or a third fight with Marco Antonio Barrera. Morales can win all of those fights. Another guy to watch is Roy Jones, because he says he's going back to heavyweight after he fights Antonio Tarver."

JIM LAMPLEY (HBO blow-by-blow announcer): "The answer is Roy Jones. He could, for instance, take the chance and fight for another heavyweight belt against someone like a Chris Byrd. He could fight James Toney at heavyweight or cruiserweight, or turn his attention onto tempting Bernard Hopkins, meeting at 168 pounds. He could choose to fight Lennox Lewis, based on Lewis' deterioration against Vitali Klitschko. Jones could fight other heavyweights, and try and further establish his dominance in that division. If he beats Antonio Tarver, he could drop and fight any number of possibilities at 168. There are just so many different opportunities for him to branch out, which no other boxer has. He has reached a stage in his career where he might consider taking more of a risk. More than any other fighter, Jones has a chance to attract the general sports fan to boxing. His final mark on boxing and big-time sports is not yet defined."

FRANKLIN McNEIL (*Newark Star-Ledger* boxing writer): "I'm looking at Shane Mosley, because you have to look at what's ahead. Obviously Shane's victory over Oscar De La Hoya opens up a lot of

possibilities. Shane could fight De La Hoya again, and he could even face Bernard Hopkins. The thing about Shane is that Shane is willing to fight anyone, and he's willing to put so much on the line, and he's capable of beating any of these guys. He meets all the criteria."



Mosley's victory over De La Hoya made the world take notice again

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

DAN RAFAEL (*USA Today* boxing writer): "I like Erik Morales, because things are set for him to make big fights. If he wins a title at 130 against Jesus Chavez, he may then have an opportunity to fight Carlos Hernandez, and even if that doesn't happen, there's always a third fight against Marco Antonio Barrera. The way the schedule is lined up, Morales is poised for a very big 2004. Another guy things are set nicely for is Arturo Gatti, because he can win an alphabet belt, then defend against a quality opponent."

TIM SMITH (New York *Daily News* boxing writer): "If Ricardo Mayorga can continue to convincingly knock people out, because he's not going to outbox anyone, he has a good chance to be Fighter of the Year in 2004. If he moves up to 154, he can fight Shane Mosley, and Mayorga will hit him harder than Vernon Forrest did. With his style and with as hard as he hits, Mayorga can be involved in a lot of exciting matches."

SANTOS PEREZ (*Miami Herald* boxing writer): "Ricardo Mayorga could be the man in 2004. He's really put himself in a great position for some great fights in 2004. He made a name for himself in 2003, and he's real appealing to the nontraditional boxing fan. He's the type of fighter who shows no fear at all."

BRIAN KENNY (ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* studio host): "Zab Judah, but it can only happen if he gets at least one signature fight. Otherwise, I can't think of another fighter who is so primed for a great year. Since losing on an early stoppage against Kostya Tszyu, Judah has fought two top-10 junior welters—Omar Weis and 'Chop Chop' Corley—and won convincingly. Eventually, one of these lightweight stars is going to move up and run into Zab. Within the division, I'd favor Judah over Arturo Gatti, Paul Spadafora, Sharmba Mitchell, Ricky Hatton, and Miguel Cotto. You wouldn't think Tszyu would give him a rematch, but Kostya is doing so with Mitchell. If Sharmba wins, he won't be able to ignore Judah for long."

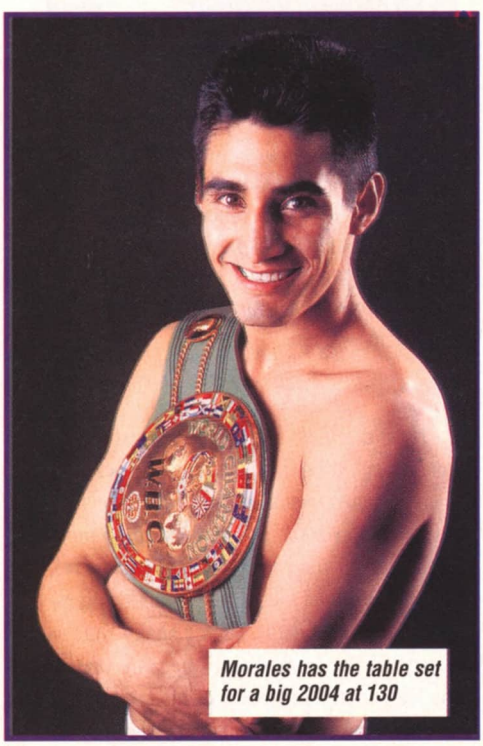

Morales has the table set for a big 2004 at 130

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

LARRY MERCHANT (HBO ringside analyst): "Arturo Gatti, because he can be the Fighter of the Year almost every year. Gatti is starting the year fighting an unknown. If he beats him, that will put Gatti in place to possibly fight Leonard Dorin, which will be like Gatti-Ward IV. A win in a competitive fight sets Gatti with Dorin again, or even possibly with Kostya Tszyu."

JAMES "SMITTY" SMITH (Ringside analyst for CSI Sports): "Ricardo Mayorga is my choice. With his two victories over Vernon Forrest, who was my 2002 Fighter of the Year for his two victories over Shane Mosley, Mayorga showed that he can win early via kayo or late via decision. He is effective with his crudeness, and he's really added some excitement from welterweight to middleweight. My choice is Mayorga because of the possibilities of future matches with Mosley, Oscar De La Hoya, and Bernard Hopkins. Because of his style, I believe his reign as champion will be filled with excitement." ■

The RING PREDICTS ...

The Breakthrough Stars Of 2004

ALEX GARCIA

His nickname is "Terra," and given the speed of his ascent and the destructive power in his fists, you can expect to see plenty of headlines reading "Terra Rising" as Garcia's career goes on. He certainly was terrifically terrorizing in his last two fights, successful step-ups that transformed the Tijuana junior middleweight from an anonymous prospect into a beltholder and the number-nine contender to Shane Mosley's world title.

In 2000, his first year as a pro, Garcia knocked out 10 of his 11 opponents, including six in the first round. In '01, all seven of his foes left the ring as kayo victims. Garcia extended his record to 20-0 (19) by the end of his third year as a pro, and then busted out in '03 by crushing respected veteran Santiago Samaniego in three rounds to win an alphabet title at age 23, before handing former U.S. Olympian Rhoshii Wells his first defeat, via 10th-round knockout.

The only hitch on his road to a sparkling 22-0 (21) record is that the big wins have come off TV, buried on those famously deep Don King undercards. The Samaniego fight was seen by virtually nobody as the show-opener underneath Roy Jones-John Ruiz, and the exciting win over Wells played only to the live crowd at Mohegan Sun on hand for Chris Byrd-Fres Oquendo. Garcia was scheduled as of press time for another bout on King's massive December 13 card—but, surprise, surprise, it wasn't expected to be one of the five bouts screened on pay-per-view.

The door is wide open for Garcia to capture the boxing public's imagination, the way other sluggers who were anonymous to American audiences, such as Ricardo Mayorga and Manny Pacquiao, did when they got their big breaks on TV. All he needs is a little exposure in 2004, and Terra will rise.

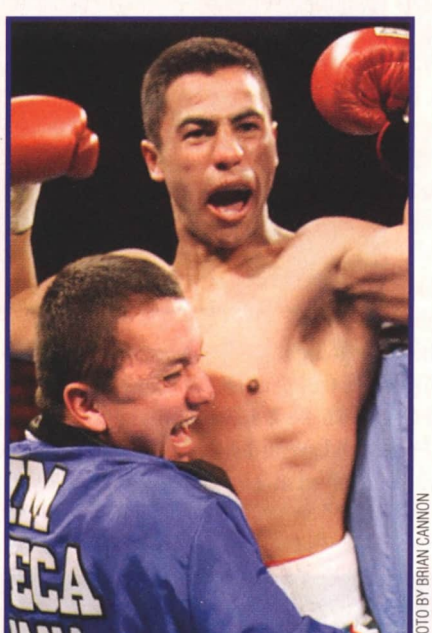


PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON

Garcia: Just needs exposure

ROCKY JUAREZ

Now that he's one of the hottest young contenders in boxing, the name "Rocky" is fitting Juarez just fine, but when he first turned pro in 2001, the name seemed more befitting the road he was likely to travel. Despite a silver medal at the 2000 Olympics, Juarez got off to such a shaky start as a pro that he immediately became one of the least touted prospects of his class.

But looking at the protective cup as half-full, at least it could only get better from there. And has it ever.

Juarez' 2002 campaign was a great improvement over his mediocre 2001, and in 2003, he cranked it up several more notches and beat four solid opponents with an excellent combined record of 86-13-2 (with one more fight scheduled for shortly after our press deadline). In '03, Juarez headlined the first boxing card on NBC in more than a decade (and looked excellent crushing Frankie Archuleta), scored arguably the two most sensational knockouts of the year (left hook annihilations of Antonio "Chelo" Diaz and David Murillo), and entered THE RING's top 10 in the talent-packed featherweight division.

Following the trend, 2004 promises to be a monster year for Juarez, 18-0 (14). The only place to go, really, in order to

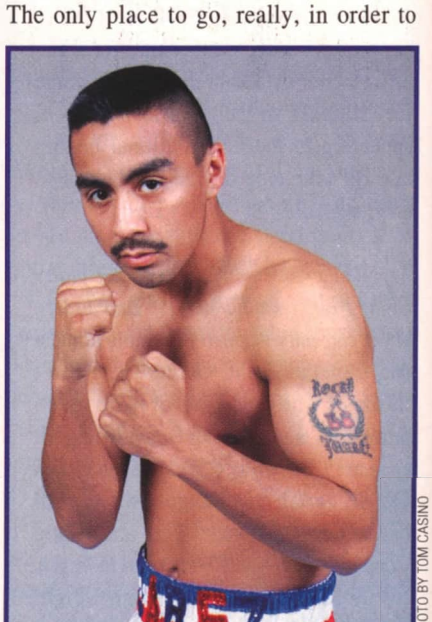


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Juarez: Beware the left hook

improve upon '03, is to fight a major titleholder, which is precisely what Juarez told THE RING he expects to do by around the middle of the year. In a division where names like Barrera, Marquez, and Gainer reside, getting to the top won't be easy. But if his steady improvement from one year to the next is any indication, Juarez will be ready in '04 to give any of those guys a rocky time.

JERMAIN TAYLOR

Not since Bill Clinton was positioning himself to assume the highest office in the land has a fresh-faced Arkansan seemed so destined for success. Taylor has it all: an amateur pedigree (including Olympic bronze), a great jab, a concussive right hand, chiseled features, a charming smile, and, perhaps most relevant at the moment, an enviable position in one of the weakest divisions in boxing.

Thanks to the overwhelming lack of depth at 160 pounds, Taylor has the luxury of fighting top-10 guys without taking actual risks—a privilege that super prospects like Miguel Cotto at 140 pounds or Rocky Juarez at 126 can't enjoy. Primarily on the strength of his eye-opening May '03 blowout of Nicolas Cervera, who had given world-class veteran Carl Daniels a much tougher fight just months earlier, Taylor is ranked number six at middleweight by THE RING, and he'd have to be a favorite against at least half of the other fighters in the top 10. It's a perfect position to be in, as Taylor can be matched against "top guys" without being rushed.

"Other than Bernard Hopkins, Jermain is competitive with anyone in that division right now," said Taylor's promoter, the always frank Lou DiBella. "Unless Hopkins suddenly starts to look his age, there's no sense rushing into that fight, but Jermain is ready for anybody else in 2004."

Taylor's new year will probably start with an alphabet eliminator against Italian Cristian Sanavia, and after that, assorted credible but beatable 154- and 160-pounders will be lined up for "Bad Intentions" to beat on. And who knows? If he continues to improve in '04 the way he did in '03, he might just be ready to assume the highest office in the division next year after all.

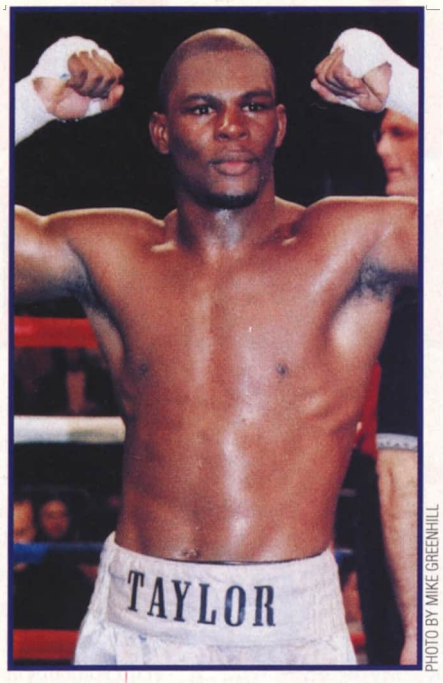


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Taylor: Tailor-made for stardom

10 MORE TO WATCH FOR

Junior bantam **Jose Navarro**, 18-0 (7), increased his level of comp significantly in '03, most notably in a close decision win over highly respected Adonis Rivas. A challenge of WBC titlist Masamori Tokuyama is on tap for sometime around the middle of '04, and the 22-year-old Navarro just might be ready for him ... We're all waiting for the next hot heavyweight prospect to emerge, and one young fighter with a shot at being that guy is **Samuel Peter**, 16-0 (15). The 23-year-old Peter makes exciting fights and is ready to start tackling fringe contenders ... With a second-round knockout of Etianne Whitaker (who went the distance with Charles Brewer) and a wide points win over otherwise-unbeaten Prince Badi Ajamu, 6'3" Detroit light heavyweight **Rico Hoye**, 14-0 (11), is ready to make some noise in a division stocked with aging veterans ... Watching 22-year-old California junior lightweight **Steven Luevano**, 20-0 (9), do his thing, you can't help but feel like you're looking at a right-handed Paul Spadafora. There is an obvious downside to being so slick, but as his first-round kayo of tough Ivan Alvarez indicates, Luevano just might have enough pop to overcome that and get people excited ... Fifteen rounds. That's all it's taken for aggressive Irish featherweight **Bernard Dunne** to amass a 9-0 (8) record, a record that shows only one fight going past the second round. Don't expect any huge leaps in competition in '04, but expect more exposure and more reason to get fired up about this Sugar Ray Leonard-promoted banger ... Francisco "Panchito" Bojado was the 2000 Mexican Olympian who received all the hype, but bantamweight bomber **Daniel Ponce-DeLeon**, 15-0 (15), is developing into possibly the best fighter from that team. The highlight so far was a first-round blastout of former flyweight titlist Francisco Tejedor, but greater highlights are bound to follow for this 23-year-old ... **Jeff Lacy's** momentum has slowed since his blazing start, but he's still one of the hardest-hitting and most marketable prospects in the world. Sure, Ross Thompson and Richard Grant both lasted the 12-round distance, but neither Anwar Oshana nor James Crawford made it two rounds against him. In the super middleweight division, "Left Hook" Lacy, 15-0 (12), could still become a force ... With two eye-opening wins over former title challengers in his first 14 fights, we don't need to worry about exciting Armenian junior feather **Art Simonyan** being moved slowly. Simonyan, 13-0-1 (7), has already stopped Radford Beasley in seven and decisioned Carlos Contreras for the USBA title. The switch-hitting 27-year-old is a veteran of 215 amateur fights and should be ready to crack the 122-pound top 10 within another couple of fights ... It's impossible to know how good untested teenaged junior lightweight **Octavio Lara**, 3-0 (3), really is, but anyone who can draw 12,123 fans for his pro debut is worth keeping an eye on ... Puerto Rican Olympian **Ivan Calderon**, 17-0 (3), hasn't scored a kayo in eight fights, but that hasn't stopped him from dazzling purists. After less than three years as a pro, Calderon already has an alphabet title at strawweight, and there are those who think he could turn into the most dominant itty-bitty fighter since Ricardo Lopez. ■

The RING PREDICTS ...

10 Burning Questions For 2004

1
Will heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis fight again?

This question is the same one that's been swirling around inside of Lewis' head ever since Vitali Klitschko came perilously close to upsetting him in June. It won't be an easy decision to make.

Lewis knows the end is near and that if he quits now he'll join Gene Tunney and Rocky Marciano as the only heavyweight champions to retire on top. On the other hand, he doesn't want the final memory of him to be that of a spent and battered fighter slumped on his stool at the conclusion of the sixth round of the Klitschko fight. Sure, he won when the doctor ruled that Klitschko's eye cuts were too bad for the challenger to continue. But a lot of folks think Lewis was lucky, and that Klitschko would have finished the job if allowed to keep fighting.

As far as his physical well-being is concerned, it's a no-brainer: Lewis should retire and enjoy his millions. But the same thing that brought him into the ring with Klitschko in less-than-prime condition will force him to fight again—Lewis' massive ego.

2
As the old guard fades, will a new heavyweight star emerge?

Currently, there are three tiers contending to take over the division. There are the young guns, which include this issue's cover subjects, the interlopers (Roy Jones and James Toney), and the best of the rest. The final category includes the Klitschko brothers, Chris Byrd, Corrie Sanders, and Hasim Rahman, fighters who have already had their limitations exposed, but are still players due to the dearth of truly outstanding talent. Toney and Jones are discussed in upcoming questions, which brings us to cover boys Dominick Guinn, Joe Mesi, and Audley Harrison. Of the trio, Guinn appears to be the most advanced, while Mesi has the biggest upside at the box office. Harrison is a step or two behind them, but has an Olympic pedigree that can't be ignored.

With so many ingredients in the heavyweight stew, you'd think somebody would bubble to the top, but the guess here is that we'll still be digging around inside the pot looking for the choicest morsel this time next year.

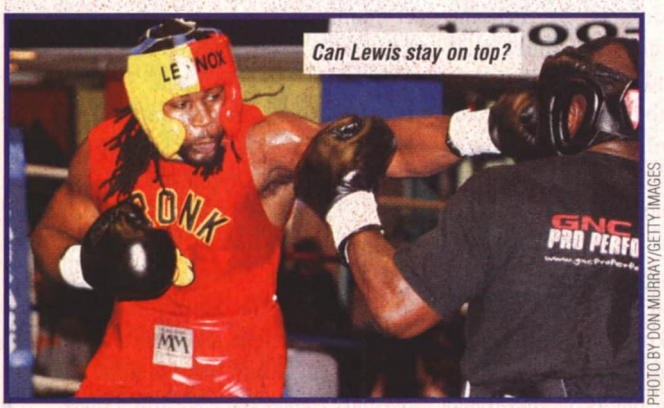


PHOTO BY DON MURRAY/GETTY IMAGES

3
Will Roy Jones return to the heavyweight division?

Jones, one of the smartest people in the sport when it comes to understanding what takes place inside the ring and why, isn't about to take any foolish risks. So, his future as a heavyweight will be predicated on finding the right opponent, one he knows he can beat, and just as importantly, one he can sell to the public.

As we went to press, it looked like Jones' light heavyweight defense against Antonio Tarver on pay-per-view would not come anywhere close to duplicating the approximately 525,000 buys his bout with John Ruiz generated. Consequentially, barring retirement, Jones will venture into the heavyweight division again before 2004 is over, albeit very cautiously.

4
Is James Toney a threat to win the heavyweight championship?

After what Toney achieved in '03, it would be foolish to discount him. Providing the opponent isn't a runner, "Lights Out" has a legitimate chance against any heavyweight in the world, including jumbo-sized types such as the Klitschkos.

5
Will Mike Tyson be a significant factor in the heavyweight division?

Even though he doesn't really relish the idea of fighting anymore, Tyson's personal finances will force him back into the ring.

Monetarily, Iron Mike will be a factor as long as he can drag his butt up the ring steps, and a match with Jones just might be the biggest fight that could be made in '04.

6
What will NBC's return to boxing mean to the sport?

If you had to pick just one thing as the single most important happening of '04, it would have to be NBC's decision to give boxing another shot on free TV. NBC experimented with four shows in '03 and was pleased enough with the results to commit to another eight to 10 shows in '04. This is the best news the industry has had in more than a decade.

But if boxing on NBC is going to succeed, several things have to happen. First and foremost, the fights have to be entertaining. Padding prospects' records or rebuilding old favorites won't hack it. Main Events, the promotional outfit NBC is working with, did a good job with the four shows in '03. Let's hope there's no fall-off now that they have a longer commitment.

It's almost as crucial that there are no major scandals involving boxing or boxers during the new NBC series. Network TV didn't abandon boxing because the ratings were low. They dropped it because sponsors didn't want to have their products associated with what many among the general public consider a scumbag sport. But if everybody is on their best behavior and the fights are good, we just might be asking about CBS, ABC, and FOX next year.

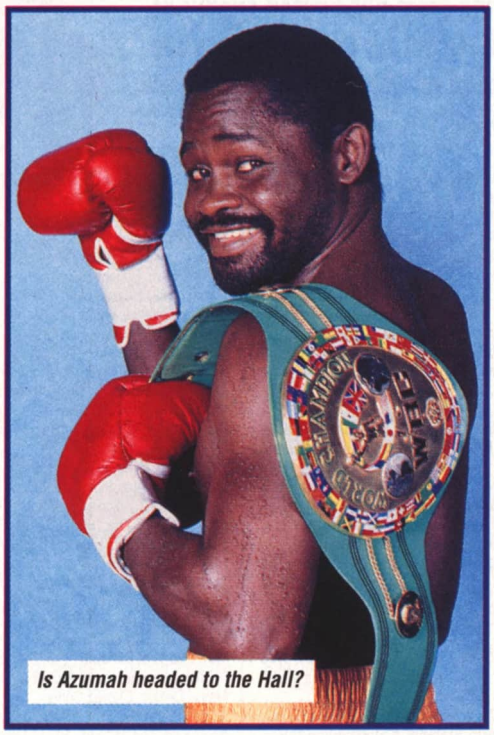
7
Can Laila Ali continue to raise the profile of women's boxing?

Unfortunately, the roughly 100,000 PPV buys and the live crowd of almost 10,000 that saw Ali's destruction of Christy Martin may represent the high-water mark for women's boxing. The problem is that there's no really high-profile opponent for Ali to fight. Lucia Rijker is probably the best known, but she's basically been a part-time fighter the last few years, and would be giving away almost as much weight as Martin. A rematch with Jacqui Frazier-Lyde is always a possibility, and some think Ann Wolfe would give Ali a good fight. But neither match is likely to take women's boxing to the next level.

8
Which Ring championship vacancies are most likely to be filled in '04?

Acelino Freitas, who has held The Ring's number-one spot at junior lightweight throughout '03, has announced he is moving up to the 135-pound division. Moreover, number-four contender Phillip Ndou will have challenged Floyd Mayweather for the world lightweight title by the time you read this, and if he's victorious, will undoubtedly stay at lightweight. Factor in the arrival of former featherweight Erik Morales, and the top of the division will have a new look in the near future. Therefore, it's not too difficult to imagine a scenario that would create a match that meets The Ring's criteria for filling the vacancy at 130 pounds.

Also, with top-rated super middle Joe Calzaghe thinking about moving up to light heavyweight, the impasse at the top of the 168-pound class, caused by the inability to make a match between Calzaghe and second-rated Sven Ottke, could be broken.



Is Azumah headed to the Hall?

9
Will the United States boxing team win any gold medals at the 2004 Olympic Games?

"It's going to be rough for a lot of reasons," admitted Emanuel Steward, the National Director of Coaching for the U.S. team. "When ABC and CBS stopped televising Olympic boxing, the money dried up. Most of our boxers don't have any international experience because we don't have the money to send them overseas. The lack of TV exposure also means not many kids are seeing Olympic boxing and deciding it's something they'd like to do. Then there's the political situation. Practically everybody is against the United States right now."

10
Will any first-year eligibles make the International Boxing Hall of Fame Class of 2004?

Former featherweight and junior lightweight titleholder Azumah Nelson is close to a lock. Not only is the best African fighter since Dick Tiger worthy, most of Nelson's important fights were seen on U.S. television, always a boost as a significant number of the voters have little or no idea of what goes on outside of the country.

First-time eligibles Terry Norris and Dwight Muhammad Qawi are also strong candidates for first-ballot induction. Qawi's case is bolstered by the fact that Matthew Saad Muhammad, whom he beat twice, is already enshrined. And, of course, Norris holds a win over Ray Leonard, who has had a plaque hanging in Canastota since '97. ■

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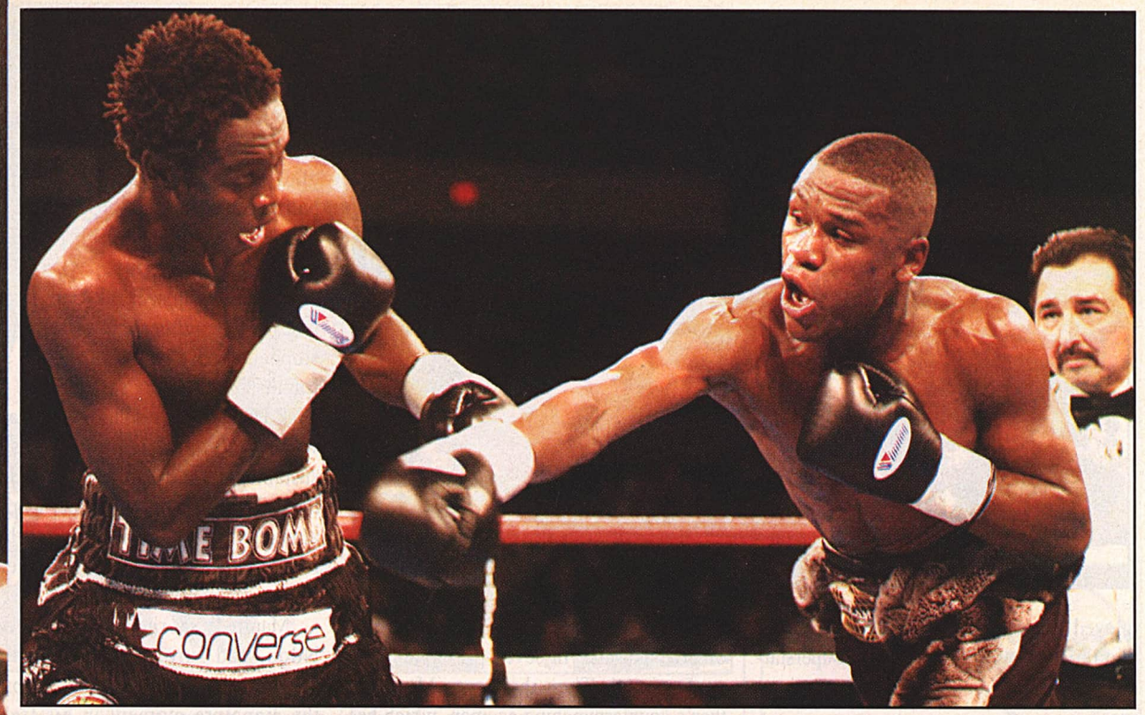
NO MORE FLOYDIAN SLIPS

MAYWEATHER Is Going To Get It Right This Time!

Mayweather celebrates his spectacular kayo of Phillip Ndou. It was "Pretty Boy's" most impressive performance since he blasted out Diego Corrales in January 2001 and it brought him a step closer to the superstar status that has evaded him despite his undefeated record.



Mayweather, his brittle hands healed, was much more aggressive against Ndou than in many of his recent fights. The champion fired powershots with both hands, but it was his right (top) that did most of the serious damage.

By David Mayo

PHOTOS BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Victory and superstardom make fleeting bed partners, only periodically joining hands in their magical method before one splits off in its own direction—usually victory, by far the more fickle of the pair. From Dempsey to De La Hoya, from Louis to Lewis, fistic history is filled with multiple losers who never lost their unique levels of attraction and instant recognizability. Superstardom is far more reluctant than victory to anoint an athlete, but once it does, it usually requires an O.J.-esque betrayal to shed the label.

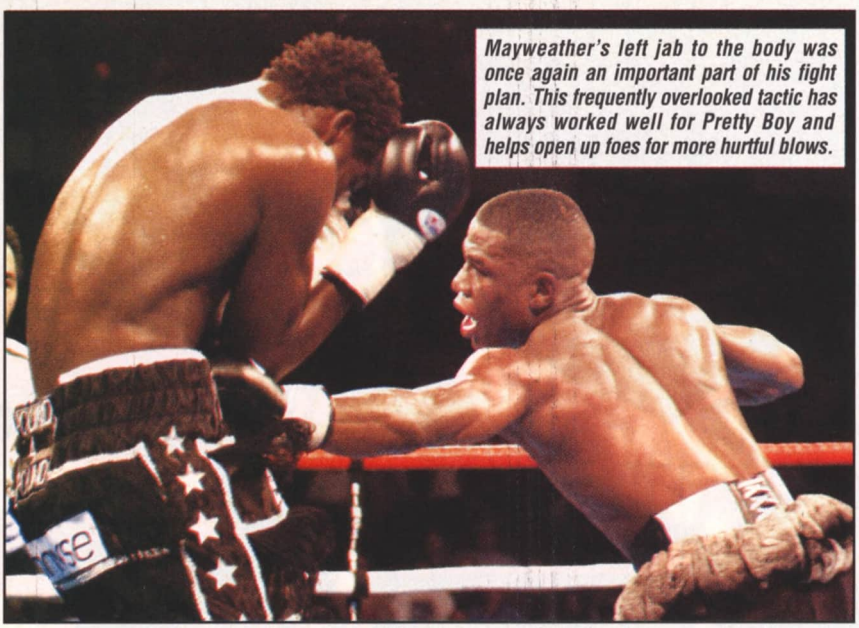
For most fighters, attaining the consistent winning level necessary to be considered for superstardom is actually the more difficult of the two. Plenty of charismatic athletes would thrive in the spotlight if they were better at their craft. But silver-tongued .500 fighters are still 50 percent losers.

Floyd Mayweather Sr. once described his namesake son as having stepped up to superstardom's line of demarcation, peering onto the other side, then backing away from it. A few months later, Floyd Sr. backed away from his son. They rarely have spoken since, with the most notable public exception being their January 2001 reunion for "Pretty Boy's" sensational victory over Diego Corrales.

Three years later, Floyd Mayweather, the lightweight champion now seeking new weights to conquer, once again has positioned himself near the line of superstardom. His track record in this position is poor. But his ring record remains unmarred, and has yielded him yet another opportunity to embrace the great beyond that exists on the other side.

He failed to step over the line, as his father suggested, during the "slave contract" dust-ups with HBO and Top Rank, which began in October '99 and lasted most of 2000. He poised himself near superstardom again after the Corrales win, but then his brittle hands gave out in mid-fight against Carlos Hernandez, and he was forced into survival mode. Mayweather's TKO of Jesus Chavez was workmanlike. He spent 2002 exclusively against Jose Luis Castillo, whose toughness prompted a visceral response to box for decisions rather than engage the toughest opponent of his career. Finally, Mayweather pecked his way to a decision over Victoriano Sosa.

A clear pattern had been established: From 2000 through the Sosa fight in April '03, Mayweather fought 88 rounds out of a possible 94. He was scintillating just once during that period, against Corrales, in a 10th-round TKO. He had a rugged non-title fight with Emanuel Burton, a disputed decision in Castillo I, and a series of



Mayweather's left jab to the body was once again an important part of his fight plan. This frequently overlooked tactic has always worked well for Pretty Boy and helps open up foes for more hurtful blows.

gloved dances. All combined, Mayweather did little in that span to embrace superstardom, even as he continued piling up victories.

"I know some of my fights haven't been exciting," Mayweather said. "I know HBO hasn't been happy. I know when I've fought at home, I haven't given the people in Grand Rapids the kind of performances they wanted. But people have to understand two things: Not everyone is a knockout artist, and not every fighter is open to be knocked out. I never said I was a knockout artist. And you have to fight different guys different ways. Look at the guys I've fought. Before Sosa, my last six title fights were against current, former, or future champions. I've always said I don't duck or dodge anybody, and my competition proves it."

Mayweather, 31-0 (21), dispelled many of the issues haunting his pursuit of superstardom with a riveting knockout of Phillip Ndou on November 1 in his hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan, which drew 9,080 fans (including 7,200 paid, for a $443,000 gate). Ndou, 31-2 (30), proved the perfect foil because he had constructed an awesome knockout record against less-than-awe-inspiring competition, and subjected himself to a full display of Mayweather's extraordinary boxing attributes.

The defense was at work. So was the trademark jab to the body, a too-often-overlooked Mayweather staple. Mayweather took the lead more often than in any of his 12 previous title bouts. The fifth round was his most exciting three minutes of give-and-take in seven-plus years as a professional. Then there was Mayweather's counterpunching acumen, which has rendered so many opponents inert (i.e., Carlos Rios, Goyo Vargas, Carlos Gerena), thereby transforming some previous Mayweather fights into tedious displays.

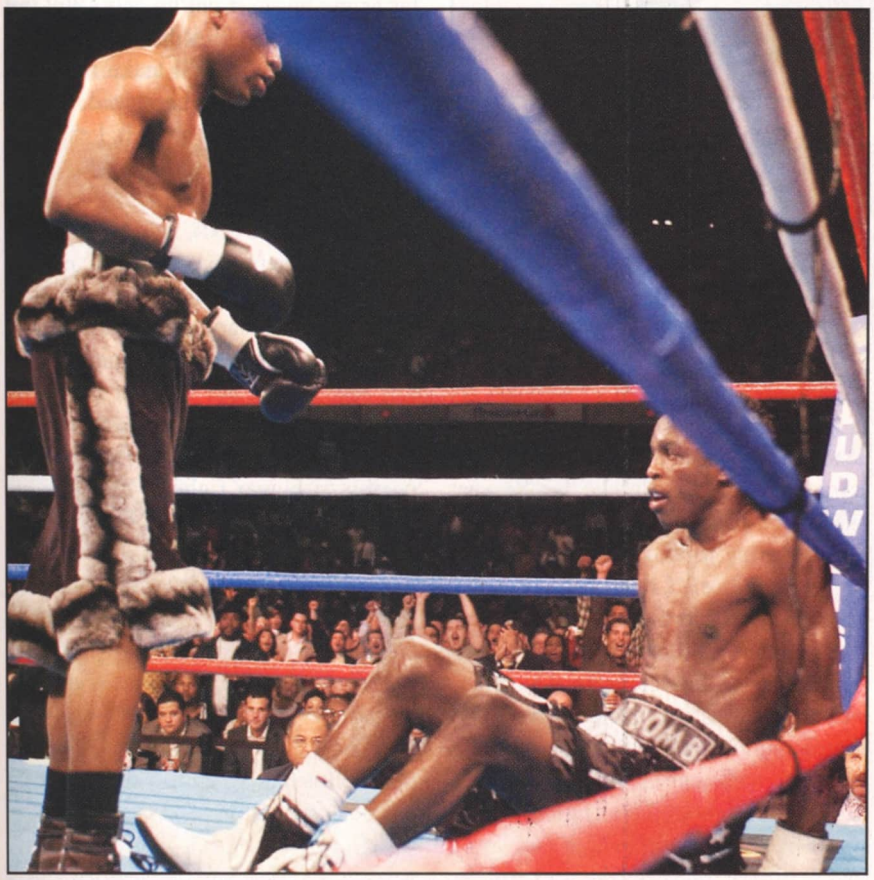
Ndou was willing to lead whenever Mayweather wasn't, and for that, the champion should remain eternally grateful. Mayweather had the South African's jab timed long before the fateful final exchange, when Ndou left a lazy left dangling too long, and Mayweather fired his pull counter over the top, the first of three consecutive rights which produced the fight's only knockdown.

Ndou was up at Frank Garza's count of nine, but the referee had seen enough, and stopped the fight at 1:50 of the seventh round. Garza never saw Ndou's trainer, Nick Durandt, behind him, simultaneously waving a white towel of submission. A sustained assault had doomed Ndou. Yet the fight still was Mayweather's briefest in almost five full years, dating to his two-round 1998 destruction of Angel Manfredy.

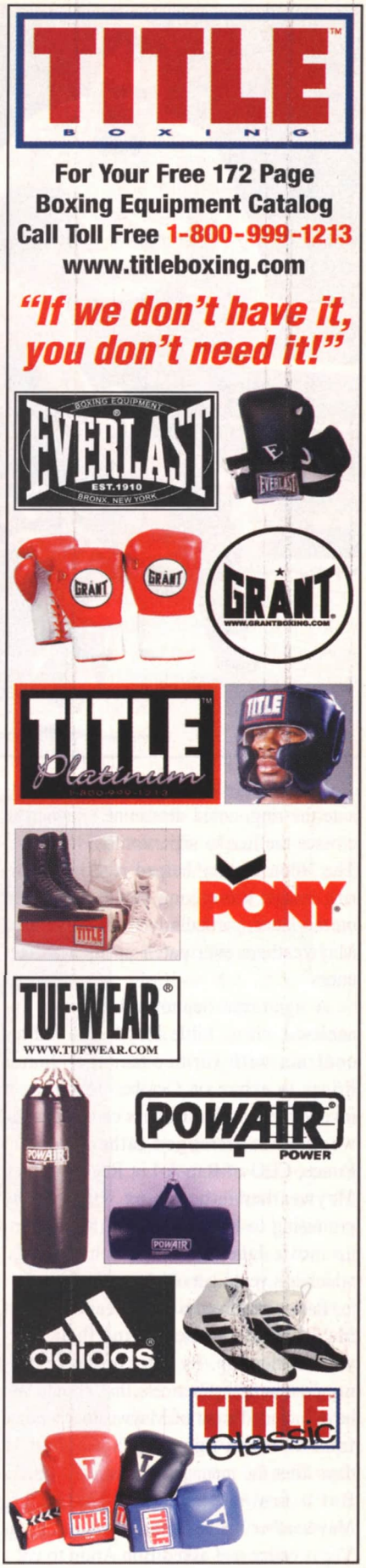
Manfredy sat ringside for Mayweather-Ndou, and surely recognized the pull counter as the same punch that produced the signature moment in his fight with Mayweather. Now the question centers upon what signature moments Mayweather has upcoming, and whether he will cross that line to superstardom that he again has positioned himself near.

Even though he was outpunched and outboxed from the start, Ndou showed plenty of heart. But even when he tried to rally, defensive marvel Mayweather avoided most of the aggressive South African's punches by ducking, rolling, and blocking.

Mayweather exploded with a trio of right hands to the head (above) midway through the seventh round that stunned Ndou and put him on the floor (direction).



Victory is no issue. There is no better-known undefeated fighter in the world. Three of the pound-for-pound claimants fought on consecutive weekends in early November, beginning with Mayweather-Ndou, then followed in quick succession by Roy Jones-Antonio Tarver and Marco Antonio Barrera-Manny Pacquiao. Mayweather's performance guaranteed he would not be lost on that attractive list.



As referee Frank Garza began to count over Ndou, Nick Durandt, Ndou's trainer, climbed up on the ring apron and waved a white towel of surrender. Shortly thereafter, Garza stopped the fight.

Mayweather's image, inside and outside the ring, could determine whether he crosses the line to superstardom this time. The Ndou victory helped reform the in-ring image; a forgiving public could help on the latter, particularly if the two Floyd Mayweathers ever patch up their differences.

A significant step toward the latter was achieved when "Little Floyd" allowed his contract with former manager James Prince to expire on October 16. Prince's involvement in the fighter's career was the wedge that estranged father and son. Prince, CEO of Rap-A-Lot Records, lured Mayweather into signing with him by promising to help with the fighter's start-up music label, Philthy Rich Records, which has yet to get off the ground.

Prince received a 20 percent share of Mayweather's purses during their four-year relationship. By letter of law in boxing contractual practices, that should not have included a cut of Mayweather's purse from the Ndou fight, which occurred 16 days after the managerial contract expired. But a few weeks before the match, Mayweather walked into Top Rank's Las Vegas office and asked Bob Arum to cut a $610,000 check to Prince, 20 percent of Mayweather's $3.05-million purse. Arum obliged.

"Bob Arum, what he has done for me personally the last couple of months, I can't do anything but praise him," said Mayweather, whose relationship with the promoter has been mercurial.

"I think Floyd realized we were always in his corner, that what happened was an aberration, he made a mistake, we tried to warn him about the mistake, but he went ahead with it, and now it's over," Arum said, referring to Mayweather's relationship with Prince. "I think he realizes we were always supportive of him and appreciates us more now for our efforts."

Rumors abounded as to why Mayweather made the payment to Prince, but the champion and his camp members refused to address them directly. "I choose to be mature about the situation," Mayweather said. "Some people can be 40 years old (Prince is 39) and not be mature." Prince was with Mayweather for nine fights, for which he cashed in to the tune of $3.56-million from Mayweather's $16.8-million grosses during that period.

"I brought James Prince into the game," Mayweather said. "I helped him build an empire, as far as boxing goes. As far as my music, I got no help. Will that slow me down? Will it hold back Philthy Rich Records? No. I'll make my mark. James Prince got what he wanted. I got no help. But I'm not mad about it. I choose to be mature about the situation, be a man, make my own decisions. I'm free now."

Mayweather's 2004, and perhaps early-2005, will determine where his pursuit of superstardom takes him next. He turns 27 years old in February, still a tender age for someone who has enjoyed uninterrupted title reigns since age 21, first at 130 and then 135 pounds. Assuming he sticks to his plan to abandon the lightweight division in pursuit of bigger fights against bigger-name opposition, that long championship streak will come to an end unless he fights Kostya Tszyu or Ricardo Mayorga next. Neither fight is likely soon. Tszyu has a contract with competing network Showtime, and Mayorga fights for competing promoter Don King.

Mayweather wants Arturo Gatti next, but at press time, Gatti had a January fight scheduled against Italian Gianluca Branco. Gatti professed great interest in Mayweather, but first said he preferred a fight against Leonard Dorin in Montreal, Gatti's native hometown and Dorin's city of residence. Dorin's retirement could throw a wrench into that plan, but if that announcement proves hasty, then Dorin-Gatti in

Montreal is a natural, and pushes back any chance of Gatti-Mayweather to late-2004 at the earliest.

Leonard Ellerbe, a longtime Mayweather camp member who took on an advisory role after Prince's departure, said Gatti-Mayweather in Madison Square Garden, "is one of our big goals." Ellerbe also insisted that while Mayweather's six-fight HBO contract has one installment remaining, for a pre-set $3.25-million purse, it would not be expended on a Gatti fight.

"Gatti-Mayweather is a pay-per-view fight and no one can tell us any differently," Ellerbe said. "Gatti has a great following, Floyd does also, and they're two great warriors. We just want to fight Gatti as soon as possible. It's a natural. As long as the money is right, Floyd wants the fight, and Gatti wants the fight too."

Kery Davis, HBO's senior vice president of programming, expressed doubt that Gatti-Mayweather could be made in 2004. He said he also is "extremely interested" in Mayorga-Mayweather for the welterweight title, but again expressed reservations about the viability of the matchup because of the promotional conflicts. Davis did not question Mayweather's sincerity in requesting the fights.

"The thing I've always loved about Floyd Mayweather is you never have to worry about his willingness to take the big fight," Davis said. "He sat behind me at Ricardo Mayorga-Vernon Forrest II, and the whole time he's tapping me on the shoulder, saying, 'Put me in with him, man. I'll knock him out.' I told him I never want to sit near him at a Lennox Lewis fight, or he'll be asking me for a shot at the heavyweight title.

"I think he looks at these guys and sees flaws that he thinks he can take advantage of. I know Floyd has the hunger for a big fight. And I know he'll be willing to take it when it presents itself."

Once-beaten Vivian Harris is often mentioned as a potential 140-pound introduction for Mayweather, but Arum has an alternative 2004 plan brewing if Gatti proves unresponsive: a springtime fight against Arum's 147-pounder, Antonio Margarito, then an Oscar De La Hoya-Mayweather showdown in late-fall. De La Hoya, who is trained by Floyd Mayweather Sr., has said he is not interested in the fight, but Arum hopes to persuade him.

"It's still the most marketable fight out there," Arum said. "The Oscar-Floyd aspect is marketable in itself, but the father against son angle really sets it apart."

Mayweather insists he would make the 19-pound leap immediately if De La Hoya nodded approval. Even in his postfight dressing room, filled with family, friends, former heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman, and even the vanquished Ndou, Mayweather shouted his willingness over the rap music reverberating throughout the room.

"I'll take care of anybody from 154 on down, and anybody over 154, I'll let Hasim Rahman take care of them," he said.

There are conflicts to resolve, but then, there always are. HBO and Top Rank both have one fight remaining with Mayweather, but the fighter insists he wants to remain with the network, and his new adviser Ellerbe said he will welcome negotiations for a Top Rank extension if Arum can deliver the desired matchups.

Ellerbe views the conflicts as opportunities, expanded further by Mayweather's thrilling win over Ndou. Ellerbe refused to outline a specific plan, because he wants Mayweather to keep an open mind. But if the new adviser has any more pull with the champion than Floyd Sr. did, or any more positive influence than Prince did, he'll eyeball the line of demarcation, then urge the still-youthful champion to step over to superstardom this time.

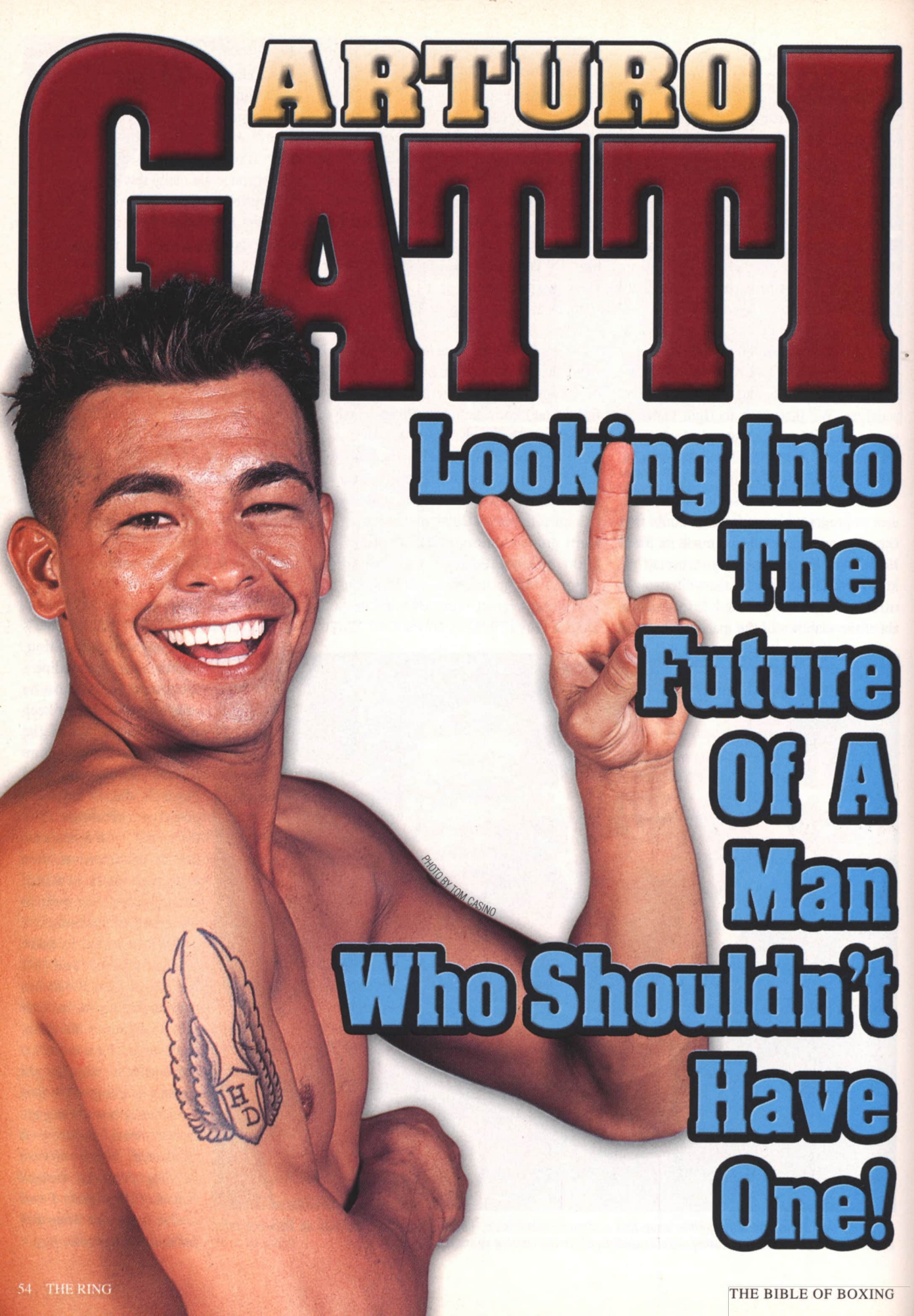
"We just want to make big fights," Ellerbe said. "I'll leave it at that. Floyd has done all that anyone has ever asked of him in the ring. Now we just have to market him outside the ring. It's just a matter of going to the next level, and he's ready to go to that next level." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

Promoter Bob Arum and Mayweather have had a stormy relationship, but they've patched things up between them and are looking forward to creating several superfights in the coming years.

ARTURO GATTI

Looking Into The Future Of A Man Who Shouldn't Have One!



By David Mayo

When Arturo Gatti signed a four-fight deal with HBO, the signature reward for years of meritorious service and undisputed valor, the network's contract stipulated two opponents for whom it would grant immediate approval if Gatti opted to fight them: Leonard Dorin and Paul Spadafora.

Within a matter of hours on the weekend of October 25-26, 2003, the likelihood of either fight diminished considerably. Dorin first failed to make weight for a WBA lightweight title defense against Miguel Callist, then immediately announced a suspect retirement. The suspicion surrounding Spadafora was far more severe a few hours later, after the former IBF lightweight titleholder allegedly shot his 20-year-old girlfriend in the chest with a .38-caliber pistol, and was arrested in Moon, Pennsylvania, on a charge of attempted murder. The woman, Nadine Russo, remained hospitalized in critical condition at press time.

Gatti held varying interest in the two men anyway. He liked the idea of a Dorin fight in Montreal, where Gatti was born and raised and Dorin lives. But he deemed Spadafora dull and unmarketable, and added, "He brings nothing to the table."

Pending Dorin's decision on whether to fight again, Gatti's two contractually acceptable opponents are occupied with other matters, so Gatti has come up with suitable replacements: Kostya Tszyu and Floyd Mayweather.

To think that in 2004 Gatti would be fighting for even a paper title, with the remotest idea of future showdowns against the two most attractive possible opponents at 140 pounds, and be nearing the midpoint of a multi-fight television contract, would have seemed ludicrous three years ago.

"You know, two or three years ago, I was really confused," Gatti said. "I was struggling weight-wise. I didn't really know where I was supposed to fit in. I almost partied myself out of boxing. And here I am now, I've been boxing since childhood, and it's back to the drawing board, almost like starting over. It's exciting to me. There's still a lot for me to achieve."

HBO tried to give Gatti a gold watch and a pat on the back once before. That was the purpose of the Oscar De La Hoya fight in 2001, and any concept of a future Gatti resurgence appeared incredibly unrealistic on that night.

"It was a going-away present," said Pat Lynch, Gatti's longtime manager. "I heard that behind the scenes, that he deserved it, that he deserved a great payday, thanks for everything you've done for us and for boxing fans, so here, go fight Oscar De La Hoya. Arturo never looked at it that way. He spent four months preparing for that fight. He was in there to win."

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Tszyu got what Gatti wants: Providing he gets past Gianluca Branco in his next fight, Gatti would like nothing better than a crack at world junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu. Moreover, Gatti knows Tszyu needs him to attract a big audience in the United States.

De La Hoya stopped the bloodied and battered Gatti in the fifth round. The boxing public didn't expect any more from a weary, worn-out warrior. Neither did HBO. Neither did just about anyone with an unfettered, impartial view of Gatti, who only had two previous fights at the welterweight limit before feeding himself to De La Hoya. From the outside, Gatti himself appeared to be waving a white flag on his own career.

"Things were so much different then," said Carl Moretti, matchmaker for Gatti's

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Nobody would have been talking about Gatti's future had it not been for his epic trilogy with Micky Ward. The awe-inspiring series pumped new life into Gatti's career and set the stage for a prosperous future providing the 31-year-old warrior keeps winning.

promoter Main Events. "The De La Hoya fight was almost like a swan song. Let's get him a payday for everything he's done. What he's done since then has been one of the greatest turnarounds of all-time. He takes care of his body now. He's doing the right things. And he's a refreshing kid. It's good to see this happen to a good person."

What happened was a new trainer, Buddy McGirt, immediately after the loss to De La Hoya. What happened was a renewed dedication to boxing, as opposed to the bottle, spurred by his fiancee Vivian Penha. What happened was a trilogy with Micky Ward that ranked among the finest series in boxing history, and certainly the most important trilogy without a world championship at stake. What happened is that the junior welterweight division's undisputed kingpin, Tszyu, seems to be growing more reluctant as the years pile up, fighting once each in 2002 and 2003, with what very well could be his once-annual appearance for 2004 scheduled against Sharmba Mitchell in February.

Tszyu, THE RING's champion, went to great lengths to unify the alphabet titles, but now seems indifferent to keeping them all. While that's understandable, given the meaninglessness of the sanctioning bodies relative to real championships, it did create a crack that Gatti is taking advantage of: The WBC, in its own bizarre fashion, sanctioned Tszyu for failing to make his mandatory defense by elevating him to "champion emeritus," while stripping the title and allowing Gatti, 36-6 (28), to fight little-known Italian Gianluca Branco, 32-0-1 (15), for the vacancy.

Gatti went to training camp in Vero Beach, Florida, triply excited. He would train for a title shot, no matter how splintered. He would get the opportunity to leave chilly New Jersey and try to pare down his 15-handicap, achieved in just three years on the golf course. And he would resume his relationship with McGirt.

Two years ago, Gatti was skipping rope at the Vero Beach gym when McGirt sauntered past. The loss to De La Hoya was still fresh. Gatti told McGirt he needed a fresh start, told him his career was in jeopardy without a style change. McGirt agreed, and they decided to work together for one week, to see how they meshed. Their first fight together was against Terronn Millett, and McGirt was not surprised to see Gatti revert often to his banger style, but ultimately employ sound boxing principles to break down Millett and score a fourth-round stoppage.

"I always thought Arturo was a good boxer, he just got caught up in his own mystique," McGirt said. "Some of us mature later than others. I feel he's

The two people widely credited as major factors in Gatti's career turnaround are fiancee Vivian Penha (above) and trainer Buddy McGirt (below). The combination of their influences has Gatti winning again and talking about fighting another four or five years.

where you have to fight," McGirt said. "But Kostya Tszyu is not as persistent; he doesn't apply the same constant pressure. It wouldn't be the same kind of fight. Micky Ward closes the gap, and when he closes the gap, baby, you're in a fight. Boxing had Ali-Frazier, Hearns-Leonard, Robinson-LaMotta. Certain fighters, when they get together, you know it's going to be on and popping. That's how it was with Arturo and Micky Ward."

The same night as Gatti-Ward I, Tszyu defended the title in Las Vegas against Ben Tackie. Mandalay Bay Events Center was cordoned down to 60 percent capacity by a large curtain, and still, three-fourths of the available seats were empty.

Gatti is in hot pursuit of Tszyu, although television conflicts could sabotage negotiations. Beyond that, with casino money necessary to make the fight financially viable, Australia would be eliminated as a possible venue. And the U.S. crowd, historically lukewarm toward Tszyu, would have to be Gatti-driven.

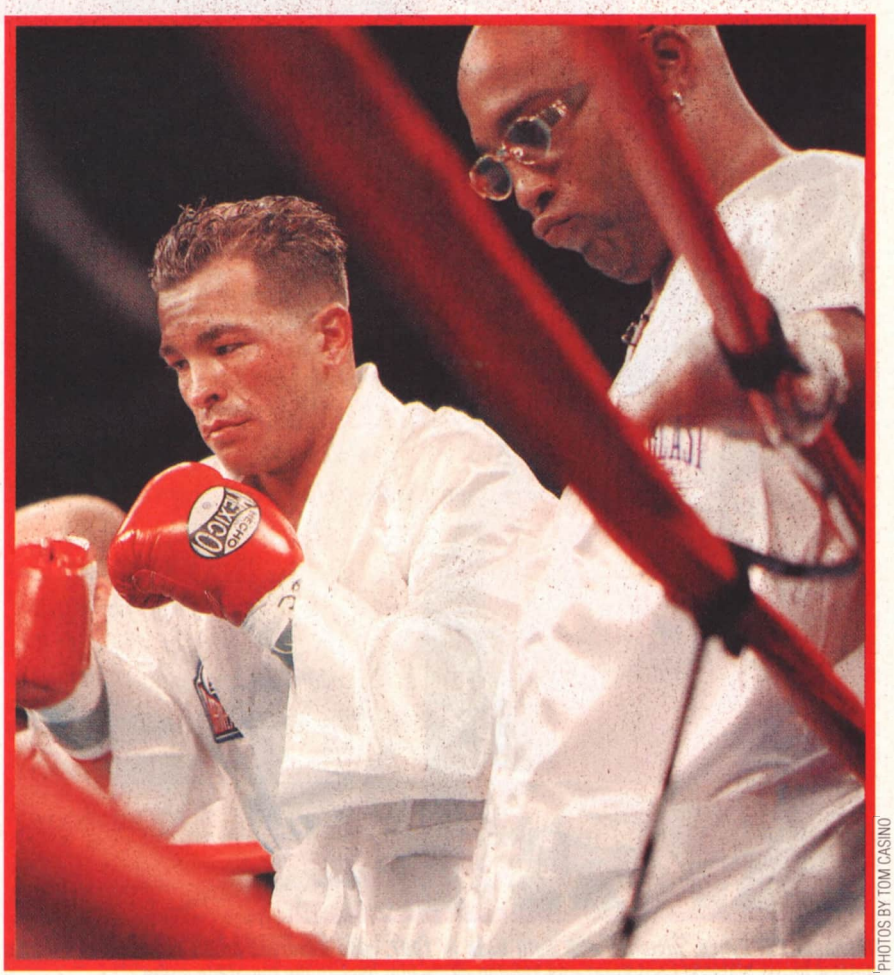
matured now. He understands what he has to do."

Gatti's reformation never was more evident than in the third Ward fight, when a hand injury forced him to box to the clear-cut decision. Gatti realized afterward that if boxing skills helped him to such a clean victory while fighting one-handed, then using those skills when physically sound might propel him to personal heights no one has witnessed.

"I've always wanted to be recognized as one of the top pound-for-pound guys," Gatti said. "That's one of my goals before my boxing career is over. I want to be regarded as one of the best pound-for-pound boxers in the world, and to do that, I've got to change my style from what people are used to. That means the blood-and-guts Arturo is finished."

Ward temporarily short-circuited the reinvented Gatti through his own brawling style. Both men independently had been involved in Fights of the Year, so the end result when they got together seemed predictable. That's why HBO wanted the matchup, and why an appreciative crowd packed Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut, for Gatti-Ward I.

"Micky Ward puts you in a position



PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO

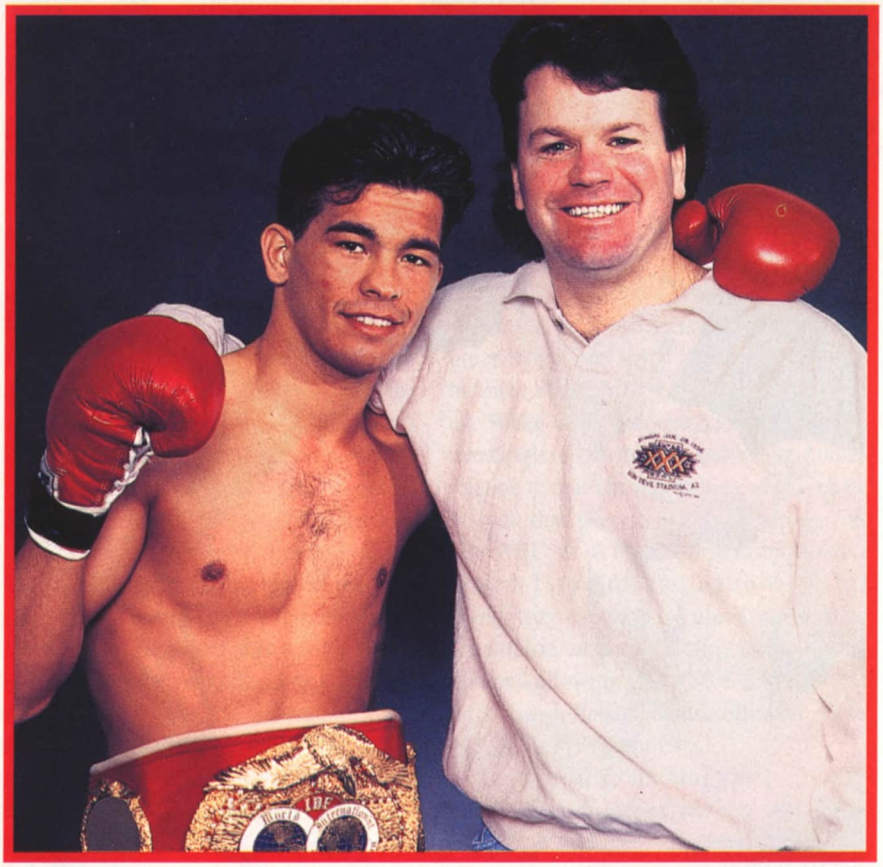
"You know what I think the problem is?" Gatti said. "As Tszyu has gotten a little older, he's gotten very picky on who he fights, he doesn't make his mandatories on time, and he doesn't fight very often," Gatti said. "But if he wants to draw big crowds in the U.S., it depends who he fights. He can't do it by himself. I want to fight Tszyu. Tszyu is the one with the titles. If I win the WBC title, and Tszyu wants to fight me, I'll be a good guy and fight him. I think winning the WBC title will give me a lot of leverage."

"But from a marketability standpoint, Tszyu doesn't offer much. I'm not even sure whether that show would be pay-per-view or not. Mayweather is one of the only guys out there who can carry the show, who can bring a big, big chunk of fans by himself."

All parties are amenable to Gatti-Mayweather. HBO has expressed interest, as have both fighters and their camps. Mayweather looked sensational knocking out Phillip Ndou in defense of the lightweight title, and has other interesting opponents at 135. But "Pretty Boy" insists he's moving up to 140.

Mayweather and Gatti agree on one thing—if they fight, HBO would need to televise the event via pay-per-view. Gatti doesn't want the fight applied to his network contract, which will have two fights remaining after Branco, and Mayweather is insistent on testing his own pay-per-view marketability in 2004.

As part of his new HBO contract, Gatti has agreed to fight WBA lightweight titleholder Leonard Dorin (pictured), but Dorin retired after failing to make weight for an October defense. If the Canada-based Romanian changes his mind and fights on, Gatti-Dorin would still be an excellent match.



Manager Pat Lynch, pictured with Gatti back in 1997, also deserves credit for sticking with his fighter through all the hard times and helping guide him back to the top of his game.

"A fight with Gatti would definitely have to be pay-per-view," Mayweather said. "It's a fight the public wants to see. But I guarantee you it isn't a fight Gatti wants to see. I don't have anything against Gatti. He's a warrior and he's been in a lot of great fights. But I would put Gatti on his face, with ease. He cuts too easy, he's too easy to hit, and he's too slow."

Predictably, McGirt countered Mayweather's assertion.

"Maybe Arturo does go out on his face one day, but it's not going to be from Mayweather. Mayweather is a good fighter, he's beat everyone they put in front of him, but Arturo has too many

guns for Mayweather," McGirt said.

Gatti said Mayweather's prediction about their proposed fight is based less on fact than genetics.

"He talks a lot, just like his father. They've both got big mouths," Gatti said. "It's definitely a fight I'm looking forward to. It's definitely in my future. But right now, there are a couple other fights I'm interested in first."

One of those fights is Branco, but the other, against Dorin, faces uncertainty given the peculiar events of late-October. Finances and circumstances will determine when and if Gatti ever shares a ring with Tszyu and/or Mayweather. In any case, Gatti's personal career timetable should allow him to achieve one or both. He said he considers it "realistic" that he will fight four or five more years in pursuit of championship glory, personal riches, and historical placement.

Moretti said he thinks the demand to see Gatti remains high enough that the fighter's goals are within reach, even as Gatti reforms his style from face-first brawler into tactical warrior.

"He's a phenomenon. He's his own brand," Moretti said. "Dale Earnhardt Jr. is a close friend of his—they met through their Budweiser deals—and Dale told him, 'You fight like I drive, and I drive like you fight.' Arturo lives in North Jersey, he has become friends with some of the New York Giants like Michael Strahan and Kerry Collins; he has met with many of the Yankees. He has become a fixture in a tough city."

He also has become a fixture in a tough sport, though as recently as three years ago, the thought that Gatti would still be here in 2004, much less talking about continuing to fight until late this decade, seemed absurd.

"I've always felt," said Lynch, "that if Arturo turned around and gave 100 percent to his career, this would be the road he would be on. He was determined to win his second world title after the first one, but he had some lean years. It truly is a miracle that we're talking now about his future in boxing. He was big before, and it seems he's even bigger now. That's just amazing to me." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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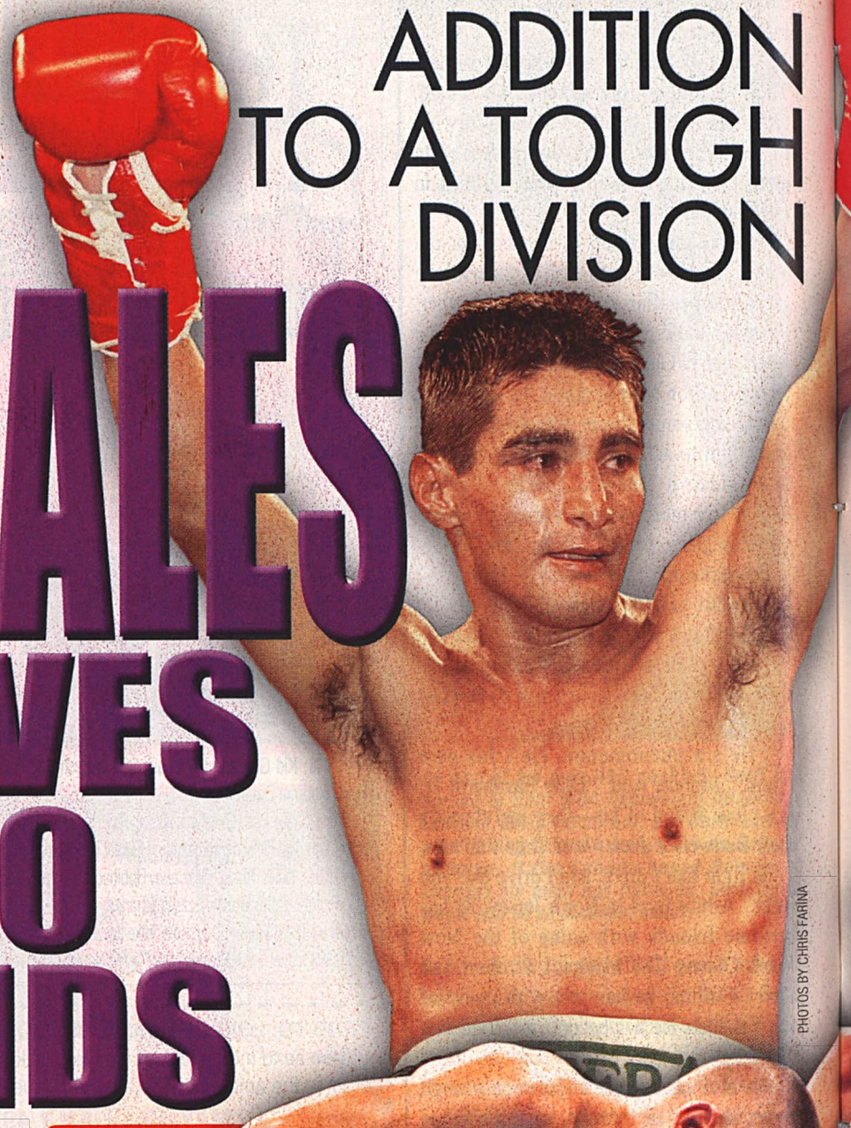
ERIK MORALES ARRIVES AT 130 POUNDS

A "TERRIBLE" ADDITION TO A TOUGH DIVISION



PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

By Paul Salgado

It was as though Erik "El Terrible" Morales suddenly emerged from a stupor in the third round of his rematch with Guty Espadas. All at once, he seemed possessed by an epiphany, reminding him of his own greatness.

Morales had taken the WBC featherweight title from Espadas two years earlier in a performance widely viewed as the most lackluster of his career. Morales had openly discounted Espadas' abilities before the fight, and seemed to sleepwalk through a match he appeared lucky to win on the scorecards.

Against Espadas the second time, it appeared as though Morales had once again left his brilliance back in North Tijuana. For two rounds, he spent some of his time languishing on the ropes, and the rest of it slugging nose-to-nose against Espadas in an entertaining but highly unnecessary give-and-take brawl. Then came the moment, and Morales was suddenly on fire. Bouncing on his toes, he began asserting his superiority, snapping his jab, and landing selective punches with remarkable precision, before brazenly dropping his hands while he deftly moved his head away from punches. Seconds later, Morales landed a right hand that momentarily paralyzed Espadas before he sprawled to the canvas in a fog.

As referee James Jen-Kin was counting out Espadas at 2:58 of the third round, Morales, 45-1 (34), casually raised a fist to the crowd at the Staples Center. It was as though he was conveying an unspoken message: He can be brilliant any time he wants to be, especially when there is something to prove. The decisive knockout of Espadas proved that their first fight had been an aberration. And now, after years of struggling at the scales, the 27-year-old Morales has moved to the 130-pound class to prove another point—that he can dominate what is arguably boxing's most talent-laden division.

If boxing immortality is forged through extraordinary matches between elite fighters, then the junior lightweight class is where Morales has the potential to become a legend. With names such as Acelino Freitas and Joel Casamayor on his radar, there is no limit to how far his star can rise. Throw in WBC titleholder Jesus Chavez and IBF titlist Carlos Hernandez, and Morales stands poised to become the most venerated Mexican fighter since Julio Cesar Chavez, the only Mexican fighter to win titles in three different weight classes. Add the thrill-a-minute exploits of recent Casamayor victim Diego Corrales, and you have no shortage of compelling challenges for Morales.

Along with nemesis Marco Antonio Barrera, Morales reigns as the most bankable star among boxing's little giants. Nearly 325,000 homes purchased their controversial rematch on pay-per-view in June 2002 that saw Barrera walk away with a disputed decision and THE RING featherweight belt.

In October '03, Morales' drawing power was put to the test when his rematch with Espadas played to a pay-per-view audience on the same night that Evander Holyfield and James Toney swapped leather at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. Morales attracted a paid crowd of 8,815 to the Staples Center, eclipsing the 7,897 that Toney and Holyfield drew. Toney-Holyfield provided intrigue to 150,000 discerning PPV purchasers, who anticipated additional value for their dollar in what proved to be an explosive co-feature between Casamayor and Corrales.

Still, Morales proved his viability. In order to avoid conflict, the Morales-Espadas card started at 9 p.m. Pacific Time, one hour after the Mandalay Bay event went off the air, and generated approximately 50,000 buys, according to Morales' promoters, Top Rank. Bob Arum stated the numbers were testimony to Morales' considerable pull with the Mexican-American demographic.

"We are delighted with our results," Arum told the *Los Angeles Times* a week after the event. "We played to our core audience. We needed about 40,000 [pay-per-view buys] to break even, and we did what we expected to do."

The roadmap to a superfight at 130 has already been laid out for Morales, beginning with a bid for one of the alphabet belts early in the new year.

"He's looking to have a title fight with Jesus Chavez, probably in February sometime," said Top Rank publicist Ricardo Jimenez. "And if everything goes well there, he'll unify that title with Carlos Hernandez in June or July. And in September they are hoping to do the third Barrera fight. But it will depend on a lot of things. Morales is staying at 130, so it will be up to Barrera to come to 130, and Morales doesn't think he will."

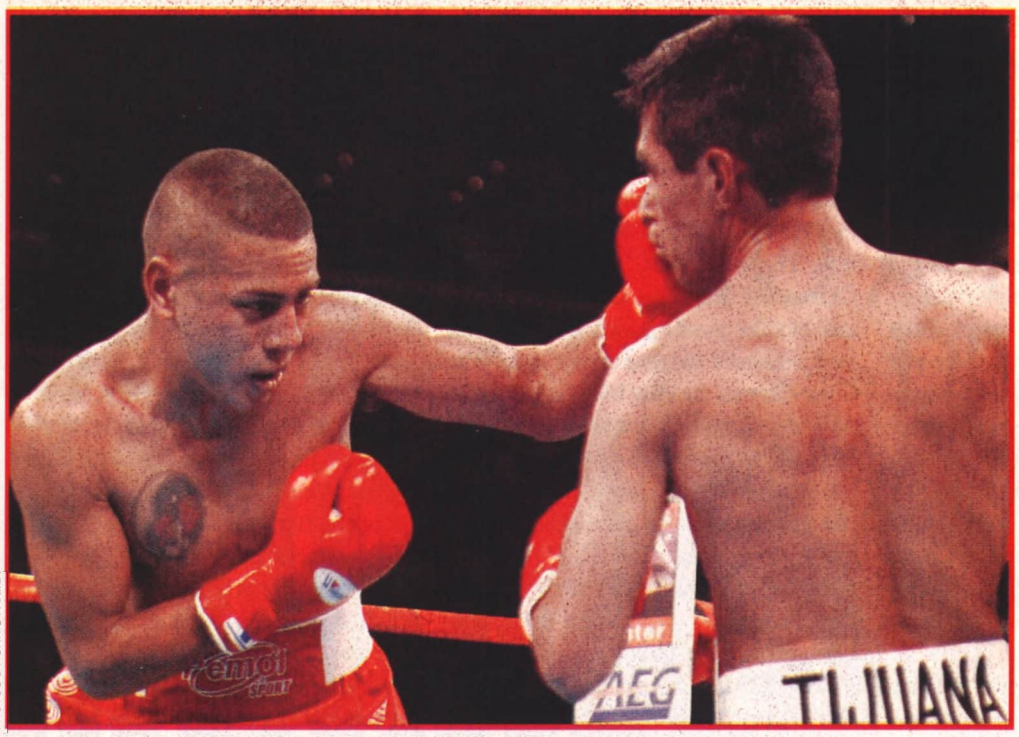
Given their affiliation to Top Rank, Chavez and Hernandez are virtually inevitable fights for Morales with tailor-made appeal to Latino fight fans. But with Morales still acclimating at 130, it's somewhat surprising that Chavez, who is widely perceived as the greater risk, is the first to be penciled in, for a February 28 showdown.

Chavez, 40-2 (28), has a propensity for turning his fights into free-swinging brawls, and like Morales he is an accomplished bodypuncher. But Morales would have the upper hand in boxing skills and power, and would likely find it relatively easy to exploit Chavez' porous defense.

"Chavez is open too much for right hands, and I think Erik has one of the best right hands in the business," said Carlos Arias, who covers boxing for the *Orange County Register*. "That could be the factor in the fight. Chavez will try to box him a little bit in the early rounds. But eventually, he likes to slug too, and I think he gets caught with one of Erik's right hands, which is one of the best weapons in boxing."

If Chavez is perceived as a relatively easy match for Morales, then one has to wonder exactly how simple it would be for him to pick apart a face-first mauler like El Salvador's Hernandez. Morales expressed interest in a potential match with Hernandez, 40-3-1 (24), in Los Angeles minutes before the supremely conditioned "Famoso" outworked Steve Forbes in a

Morales' invasion of the junior lightweight division proved a success when he stopped Guty Espadas in the third round with a potent right hand to the head (left). Morales, a former beltholder at 122 and 126 pounds, now has his sights set on dominating the talent-rich 130-pound class.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

Morales seemed a bit lackluster in the first two rounds of his rematch with Espadas and became involved in a few unnecessary exchanges. But after catching a few shots (above), he exploded in the third to kayo his fellow Mexican with astonishing ease (below), totally erasing the bad taste of the controversial decision he received over Espadas in 2001.

tightly contested slugging match on the Morales-Espadas II card. The fight was a virtual bloodletting for Hernandez, who prevailed despite having his nose broken in the first round, and sustaining cuts over both eyes resulting from headbutts. The second cut, which came in the 10th round, resulted in a prompt termination of the bout, leaving Hernandez the winner via technical decision.

While Morales would seem to have easy pickings against Hernandez, the dogged slugger has made a career out of surprising prognosticators by extending his toughest opponents, including Genaro Hernandez (L 12) and Floyd Mayweather (L 12).

"A lot of people look at Morales-Hernandez as a mismatch, but Famoso's been in mismatches before and given a good account of himself," said Arias. "I see him making it a really tough fight, maybe going the distance. He'd definitely take a pounding, but I don't know if Erik would knock him out. When you're talking about pure grit and determination, Hernandez has made every fight he's in pretty much into a brawl. You're always going to get roughed up with Hernandez, so I don't think it's an easy fight. I still think that Erik's favored big time, but it's not easy."

Among top-notch 130-pounders, Freitas, 34-0 (31), could very well be the most intriguing of Morales' potential rivals. Originally considered a pure puncher, Freitas has developed into something of a chameleon of late. He turned boxer against Casamayor (W 12) and Daniel Attah (W 12), but reverted to his slugging ways against Juan Carlos Ramirez (KO 4). In his most recent defense, against Jorge Barrios, Freitas visited the canvas twice despite an attempt at boxing conservatively. Although Freitas sliced up the unrelenting Argentinean and punctured his eardrum, he found himself in a war before pulling off a final-round knockout.

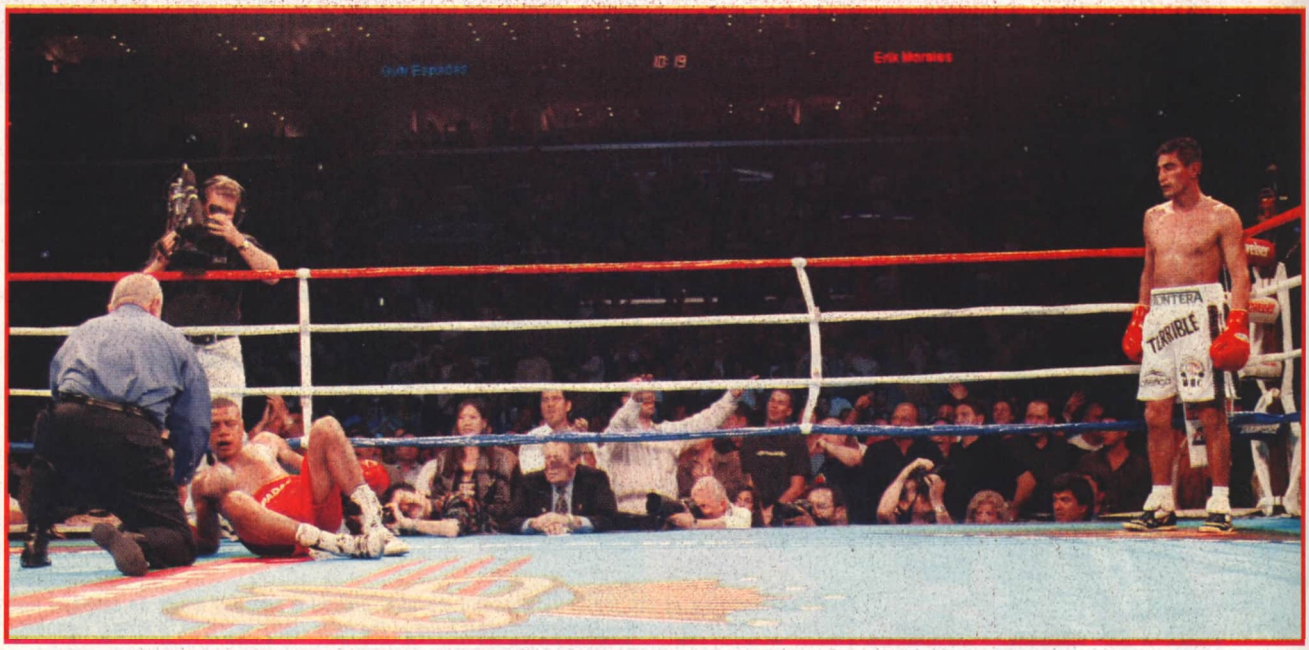


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Is there anyone who doesn't want to see Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera go at it one more time? If featherweight king Barrera is willing to follow his old rival up to 130 pounds, it's possible that a rubber match can be made toward the end of the year.

While Morales would unquestionably test the notorious instability of his chin, it's uncertain which Freitas would show up. It's conceivable that an aggressive-minded Freitas would force a slugging match reminiscent of Morales' first fight with Barrera. A safety-conscious Freitas, however, could box cautiously and seek to steal the decision as he did with Casamayor.

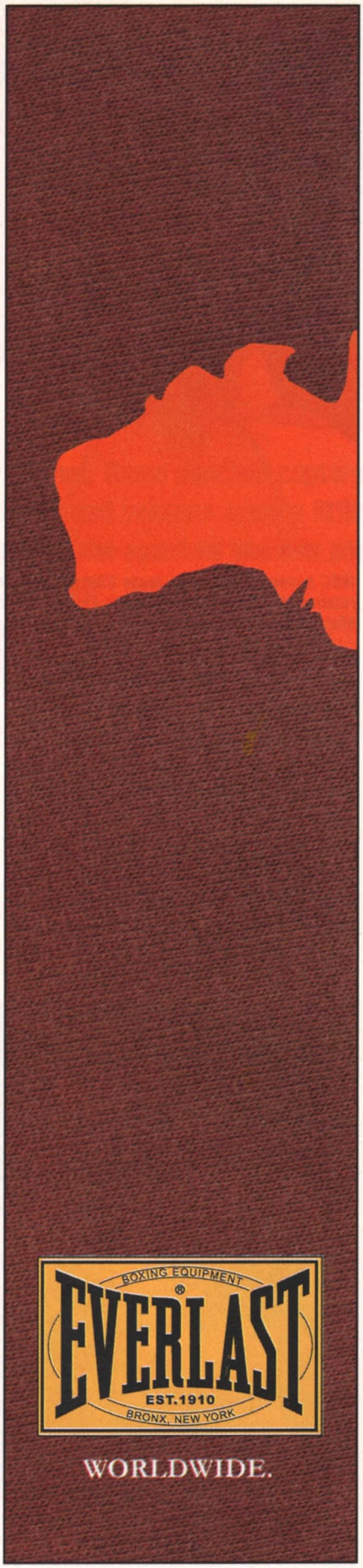
Jimenez acknowledges that Freitas would be the preferred opponent for Morales in the event that a third fight with Barrera can't be made. But according to Freitas' promoter, Art Pellulo, it's a matchup we will never see at 130 pounds.

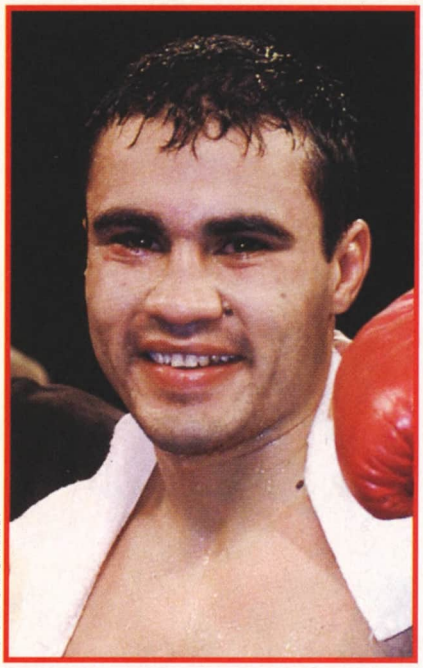
"Right now, Acelino's looking to 135 because it's very difficult for him to keep the weight down," said Pelullo. "I'm about 95 percent sure his next fight is going to be at 135. He had a real difficult time with the Barrios fight. From the time of the weigh-in to the next afternoon, he gained 17 pounds. Even though he has good training camps, I don't think the structure of his body can handle making 130 anymore. He's not tall, but he's very wide. And I saw that when Showtime weighed him in the next day and he was 147 pounds."

If Freitas is not a long-range option for Morales, there is always Corrales, 37-2 (31), and Casamayor, 30-1 (19). Both fighters upped their currency in a possible candidate for Fight of the Year that southpaw Casamayor won after a battered Corrales, sporting hideous cuts inside his mouth and above his lip, was not allowed to continue after the sixth round.

Morales has been in with tricky southpaws before—he destroyed a fading Kevin Kelley in '00—but it's questionable whether or not he has dealt with anyone possessing the vast experience of former Olympic gold medalist Casamayor.

"Casamayor poses the biggest problems for Morales. He's an incredibly slick boxer, plus he's got power, and he's shown that he can get up from a knockdown," said Arias. "And on top of all that, this guy is one of the nastiest dudes in the ring. He's going to rough you up with elbows and low blows. You've got to go through everything; not only the slick boxing, but also the southpaw style, the good chin, he's got some power, and he's got the roughhouse tactics. So I think that the guy poses the biggest problem to anybody at 130 pounds. We saw what Casamayor





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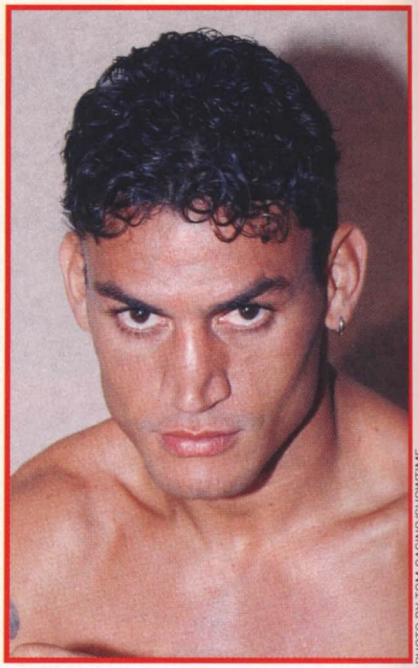

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

WBC super feather boss Jesus Chavez (left) is probably next for Morales, in February 2004. IBF 130-pound beltholder Carlos Hernandez (center) retained the title on the Morales-Espadas II card and is also penciled in for a fight with Morales in 2004. Perhaps the biggest money match for Morales would be Acelino Freitas (right), but his future as a junior lightweight is in doubt.

did to 'Chico' Corrales. He might be the biggest challenge out there for anybody."

And speaking of Corrales, at 6'1" he would be the only one among his potential rivals to tower over the 5'8" Morales. With quick hands and a numbing left hook, Corrales was impressive in title defenses that saw him summarily destroy Angel Manfredy and Derrick Gainer. But since being dominated by Mayweather in January '01, and a subsequent 14-month incarceration for domestic abuse, Corrales seems to have slowed a step and appears more vulnerable defensively. He was down five times against Mayweather and twice against Casamayor, suggesting his chin would be an inviting target for Morales' laser-like rights.

Despite the challenges at junior lightweight for Morales, there is always the looming shadow of unfinished business with Barrera, and the disputed wins they own over one another. A third fight at a catch weight of 128 pounds had briefly been discussed between the two camps, but Morales now insists fighting below 130 pounds is no longer an option. That means Barrera will have to venture up the scale if he is serious about securing an epic trilogy with Morales. But Jimenez believes Barrera is no longer integral to Morales' career path and sees the real challenges at 130 pounds and beyond.

"From Erik's perspective, as far as the people in Mexico are concerned, he beat Barrera in June," said Jimenez. "As far as the people are concerned, Erik's better. In Mexico, they don't think a third fight is that meaningful to his career. They are looking at him from the perspective of bigger fights at 130. The ultimate fight for the fans would be if he had a chance at Floyd Mayweather. And that's the point he would like to get to."

With so many threats at 130 pounds, another five-pound foray to the lightweight ranks for an ultimate showdown with Mayweather seems almost incomprehensible. But it's a captivating fight that every fan would want to happen. So would Erik Morales—because great fighters always have something to prove. ■

Paul Salgado is a freelance writer based in Toronto, Ontario, and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Joel Casamayor, pictured tagging Diego Corrales with a right hand, just might be the toughest assignment for Morales at 130 pounds. But the always-dangerous Corrales, who was stopped by Casamayor in the sixth round, is still another possibility.

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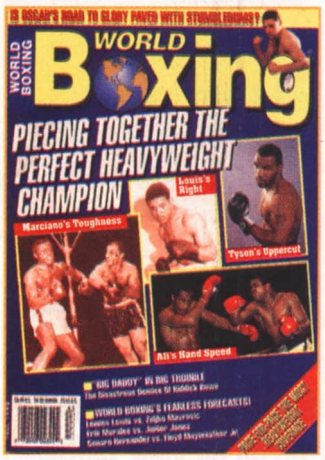

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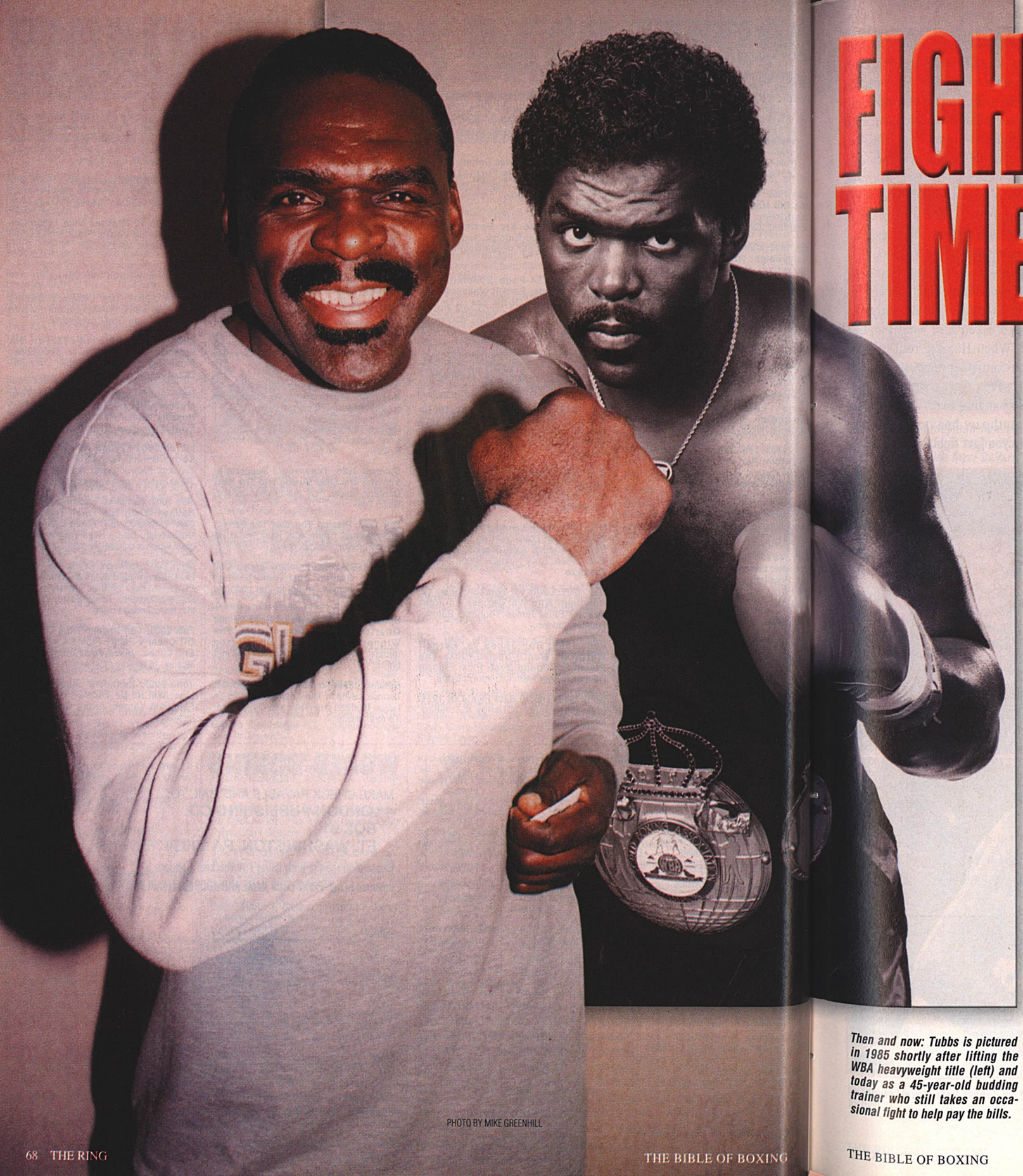

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Then and now: Tubbs is pictured in 1985 shortly after lifting the WBA heavyweight title (left) and today as a 45-year-old budding trainer who still takes an occasional fight to help pay the bills.

FIGHTING AGAINST TIME

CAN TONY TUBBS' NEW CAREER SAVE HIM FROM HIMSELF?

By Robert Mladinich

Right now, former WBA heavyweight titleholder Tony "TNT" Tubbs is in a race with himself, hoping that his new career as a trainer will catch up with his financial needs before his old career as a fighter overtakes him physically. Sadly, the 45-year-old Tubbs is still fighting, and in his most recent bout, on July 25 against undefeated prospect Abraham Okine, he was knocked out in the eighth round. It was his fifth loss in his last eight bouts.

"When they come asking for child support, I got to take a fight," rationalized Tubbs. "I know people are using me for a steppingstone; they've been doing it for a long time now. I don't mind people using my name, as long as I get paid."

Because Tubbs has 16 children, ranging in age from four to 26, the $5,000 he earned for fighting Okine did not come close to getting his bank account out of the red. And Tubbs makes it clear that, for the time being at least, he has no intentions of giving up fighting. But Tubbs, one of the so-called "Lost Generation" of heavyweights who ate and/or partied their careers away during the 1980s, insists he will never end up like Greg Page.

Page, along with Tubbs and Tim Witherspoon, was a charter member of this notorious group of slövenly heavyweights, and like Tubbs, Page kept fighting way past his prime in order to pay the bills. It caught up with him in September 2001, when Page suffered permanent brain damage in a knockout defeat to Dale Crowe.

"What happened to Greg, I'll make sure I get out before that can happen to me," said Tubbs, whose record now stands at 40-11 (23). "This last fight, I was beating the guy for eight rounds. I took the fight on two weeks notice, and ran maybe two times. I just got to stop being lazy. I just got to do things right, and I can stay with anybody."

As delusional as that assessment may seem, Tubbs, who has always been a bit of a lovable rogue, also has a Plan B that is much more plausible. He didn't get rich as a championship-caliber fighter, so he is astute enough

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Tubbs believes he's found the right fighter in undefeated Louisiana heavyweight Preston Hartzog (left) to help him establish his reputation as a world-class trainer. The 6'5", 270-pound Hartzog is delighted to have a man of Tubbs' experience in his corner.

to realize he's not going to make much more than pocket change as a geriatric pro. But Tubbs' tremendous natural abilities and globetrotting career has given him a wealth of knowledge, all of which he hopes to utilize in his new role as a fledgling trainer.

Tubbs had a well-chronicled drug problem and served several short stints in jail, but he's rebounded from those exploits and has been clean and sober since October 2002. He's already training Preston Hartzog, an undefeated 6'5", 270-pound behemoth who is the brother of Louisiana-based promoter Anna Beth Goodman, and undefeated middleweight Jimmy Mince, who fights out of the Goodman stable.

Although he's just getting started, Tubbs hopes to someday be talked about with the same reverence as Emanuel Steward and Buddy McGirt, whom he considers the best trainers in the business.

When Tubbs and Hartzog first met, Tubbs didn't even ask the fighter his name. Having heard that he was a southpaw, Tubbs instead asked him what hand he wrote with. When Hartzog told him his right, the transformation began.

"For six, seven weeks we worked on nothing but changing over," said Tubbs. "Being a southpaw heavyweight isn't going to help you [get fights]. That was the

PHOTO BY SCOTT ROMER

Tubbs drives a right to Greg Page's body during the April 1985 fight that earned him the WBA heavyweight belt. Like Tubbs, Page (inset) fought on after his prime was over, and eventually suffered a brain injury during a bout in 2001.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Tubbs gives journeyman heavyweight James Walton a few final tips before Walton gloves up for a bout on the Joe Mesi-DaVarryl Williamson card in Buffalo. Still responsible for the support of many of his 16 children, Tubbs can't be picky about whom he works with.

first thing we had to work on, and Preston didn't like it one bit."

"I had to take butt kickings all over again," said the 27-year-old Hartzog, 10-0 (4), who started training with Tubbs in mid-2002, shortly after his third pro fight. "Tony immediately starting undoing everything I had already learned."

Growing up in Bogalusa, Louisiana, Hartzog and his late father Seymon, a jack-of-all-trades who had been a local football hero at Southeastern Louisiana University, were maniacal boxing fans who loved to watch Larry Holmes, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Marvelous Marvin Hagler together.

When he was 11 years old, Preston started venturing to the Bogalusa YMCA, where such notable local pros as Lionel Butler and Anthony Stephens trained daily. Before long, trainer Jimbo Stephenson took the enthusiastic youngster under his wing, and they would often travel to New Orleans so Hartzog could be fine-tuned by former light heavyweight champion Willie Pastrano. Other times, when sparring was scarce, Hartzog would venture into the Washington Parrish Correctional Institute to work out with the inmate boxing team.

During this time, Preston and his father were inseparable. Even after Preston joined the Army in '95 and was accepted into the prestigious World Class Athlete Program in Colorado Springs, which had already prepared former servicemen Ray Mercer, Andrew Maynard, and Anthony Hembrick for Olympic competition, Hartzog and his father remained close. So when Seymon died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 54 in '96, Hartzog found himself spiritually and emotionally adrift. For as long as he could remember, he had told his father he wanted to be either an astronaut or the heavyweight champion of the world. Seymon always fostered those dreams with encouragement and by ingraining in young Preston the belief that with dedication and perseverance anything was possible.

"I had close to 100 fights as an amateur, and won quite a few military titles," said Hartzog. "I was a three-time Armed Forces champion. But it was very sad to

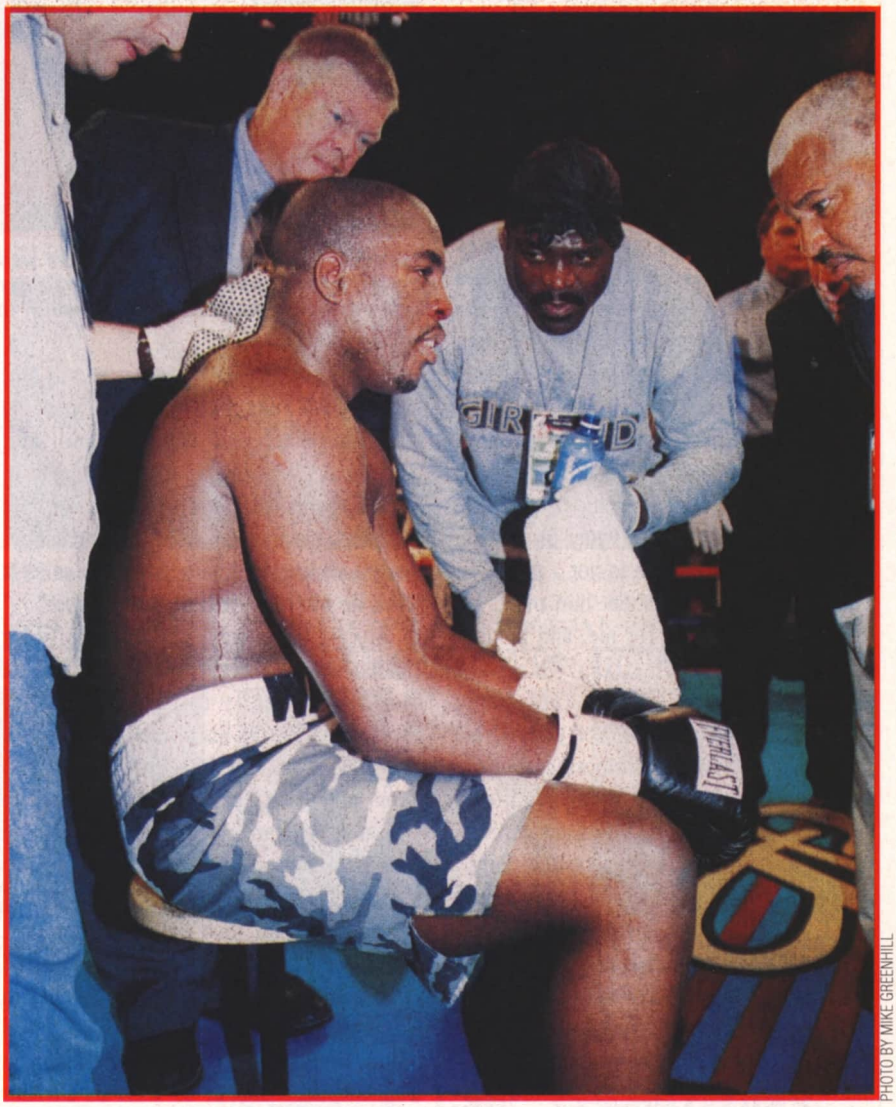

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Tubbs joins the doctor and others in checking out Walton shortly after he was stopped by Sergei Liakhovich. Tubbs knows how Walton feels, having been stopped five times in his own career.

not have my father around to share it with. I used to see guys at the national championships with their fathers in the corner, and I would get very upset. I envied them. My father always said I had great talent, but he never got a chance to really see it."

One of the reasons that Goodman, the wife of actor John Goodman, got into the boxing business was to watch over her little brother's career. Already a highly successful businesswoman who owned a popular New Orleans children's retail store called Pippen Lane, Goodman was mesmerized when exposed to the daily machinations of the boxing business. Even as her promotional firm, the New Orleans-based Kingfish Boxing Productions, flourished, her first and foremost goal was, and still is, her brother's well-being. Knowing he was blessed with natural talent, the last thing she wanted was for him to be devoured by the sharks that inhabit the often-shadowy world of pro boxing.

"I began in the business just looking to be a manager for my brother," Goodman said. "But everything snowballed from there. "I'm involved now more than I ever could have imagined. As stressful as it can be at times, I'm loving it."

It was Goodman's assistants, Peter Brody and Bill Benton, who introduced Hartzog to Tubbs. While they fully expected Tubbs to be a great boxing teacher, they did not expect him to become a sort of surrogate father in the process.

"I can talk to Tony about everything, not just boxing" said Hartzog. "He's been through so many things in his life, and he is very wise. He helps my sister protect me from the wolves, and he is not a yes man. That's what I respect about him most. He has too much respect for me, and boxing, to bulls___ me."

Hartzog was well aware of Tubbs' drug problems, but rather than worry about his past, he found it more important to laud him for the way he was living his life in the present. If anything, Hartzog admires the fact that after enduring so much, Tubbs is still standing.

"I've seen drugs destroy a lot of my friends, and I know that once an addict, always an addict," Hartzog said. "Of course, Tony's addiction lurked in my mind. But what did I have to lose? How many former world champions were willing to train me? And Tony was a true 15-round champion, old school all the way.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Tubbs considers Buddy McGirt, pictured working the corner of Arturo Gatti, one of the finest trainers in the game today. McGirt was a contemporary of Tubbs' as a fighter in the '80s and '90s before becoming one of the sport's foremost cornermen.

"Losing to that guy [Okine] had to hurt him because Tony is a very proud man. He called me right after the fight and said, 'I'm done.' Whether or not he sticks to it, we'll have to see. That's his decision. He still has a burning desire to become heavyweight champion again, but always says when he wins it, it will be through me."

Boxing had always come so easily for Tubbs, he took his gift for granted, and he didn't train nearly as rigorously as he should have during his prime in the mid- to late-'80s. Realizing how those transgressions negatively affected his career, he refuses to let Hartzog choose the same path of indifference and lethargy. He and Hartzog have traveled the country together, sparring with such top contenders and championship-caliber fighters as Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko and James Toney in Los Angeles, Joe Mesi during Mesi's preparation for DaVarryl Williamson in Buffalo, New York, as well as Eliecer Castillo and Michael Moorer.

"Anyone who thinks Preston's got it easy don't know what they're talking about," said Tubbs. "Look at these camps he's training in. These boys are making him work, making him learn the hard way. As long as I keep that '0' at the end of his record, we'll keep moving up. Preston makes my job easy because he wants to do all the right things to become heavyweight champion. By the time he becomes a 10-round fighter, everyone will have heard of him. And they'll have heard of Tony Tubbs the trainer, too."

"I never could have imagined that someone like Tony would be training me," said Hartzog. "He is one of the best pure boxers I've ever seen. We have grown very close, and I feel extremely lucky."

But maybe it's Tubbs who is the lucky one.

"I threw a lot away," said Tubbs of his squandered youth, "but someone threw me a lifeline when they introduced me to Preston." ■

Robert Mladinich is a freelance writer based in New York City and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

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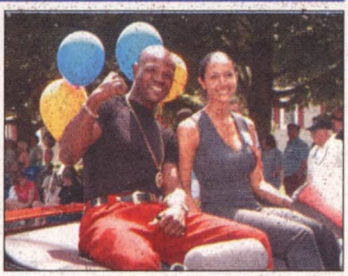

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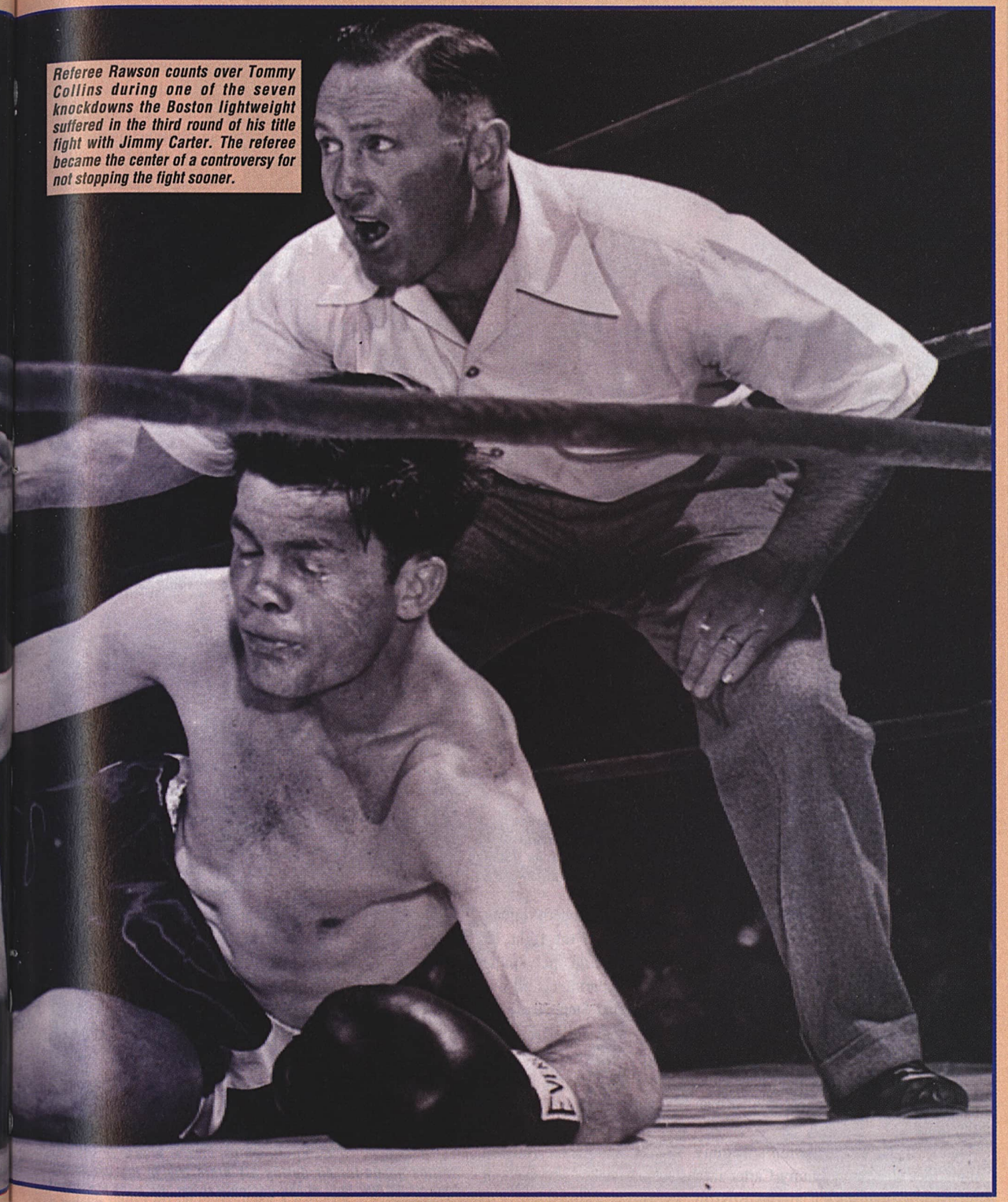
MEMORIES OF THE BEANTOWN BEATDOWN

Did The Controversy Die With Tommy Rawson?



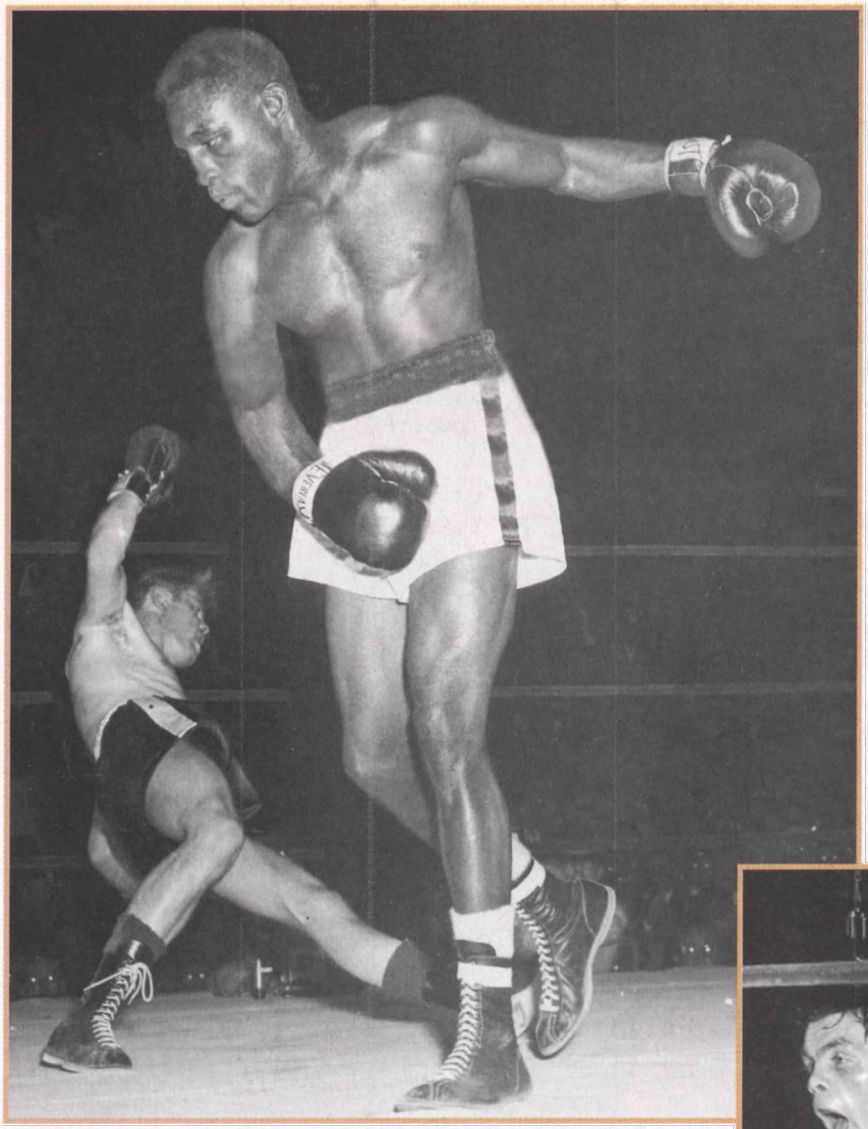
Referee Rawson counts over Tommy Collins during one of the seven knockdowns the Boston lightweight suffered in the third round of his title fight with Jimmy Carter. The referee became the center of a controversy for not stopping the fight sooner.

By Pete Ehrmann

With the exception of one wild night that happened 50 years before his death on September 16, 2003, Thomas R. Rawson Jr. was an admired and inspirational figure in New England boxing, thanks to his determination "to be on the level and do what's best" for the sport in which he was involved for most of his 94 years.

The thousands of students to whom he taught the finer points of self-defense at the Harvard University Boxing Club for 2½ hours every weekday afternoon from 1941 up to his retirement in 2002 knew him as "Coach Rawson," a genteel, smiling, little man who demanded respect for the sport and wouldn't stand for any "funny business," including the use of language not acceptable around the family dinner table.

Rawson's service to boxing included an 18-year stint (1960-'78) as chairman of the Massachusetts Boxing commission. The son of legendary New England featherweight Tommy Rawson Sr., Tommy Jr. won the junior national lightweight championship in 1929 and, after compiling a



Carter follows through with a right-hand swing that floors Collins again in the fourth round. All told, the challenger, who had a habit of coming off the floor to win, was knocked down 10 times before the bout was stopped at 2:28 of the fourth.

222-5 simon-pure log, followed his dad into the pros and had a noteworthy career that ended with a 1936 kayo loss to future lightweight champion Bob Montgomery.

After his retirement as a boxer, Rawson remained between the ropes as a referee, working, by his own count, more than 9,000 matches—one of which made him, at least temporarily, the most reviled man in the sport.

On April 24, 1953, Boston's Tommy Collins met champion Jimmy Carter in a lightweight title match at the Boston Garden. A rough-and-tumble slugger who'd done most of his fighting as a featherweight, Collins was knocked down 10 times in front of a national television audience in a fight *The New York Times* would call "one of the most reprehensible mismatches in modern ring history." After the fight, TV stations and newspaper sports departments all over the United States were deluged with calls from outraged viewers—some of them from boxing commissioners.

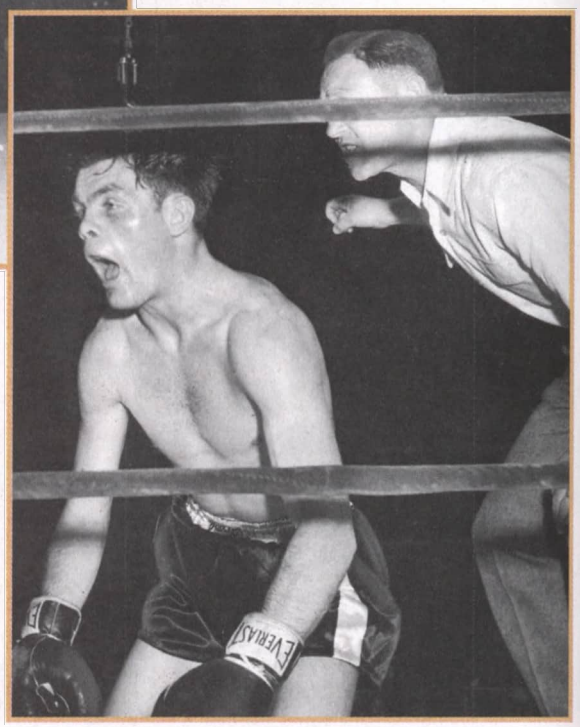
The object of their wrath was referee Rawson, whose handling of the bout, wrote Nat Fleischer, THE RING's editor and publisher, set boxing "back to the bare knuckle era of brutality."

"Battered down seven times in the third round, helpless, his eye closed and his face distorted, his pins so wobbly he couldn't stand up straight, his senses gone so that he couldn't direct himself against his opponent, poor [Collins] had to submit to additional punishment that placed his life in danger," wrote Fleischer. "And all because Tommy Rawson, an old-time fighter, saw more fit to exhibit his skill in counting from one to eight—a baby's job—than the use of common sense, efficiency, and a human heart."

"Brutal Title Fight Shocks TV Viewers," was the front-page headline in *The New York Times* the day after the bout that finally ended at 2:28 of the fourth round after one of Collins' handlers climbed into the ring as his fighter was being counted over for the 10th time.

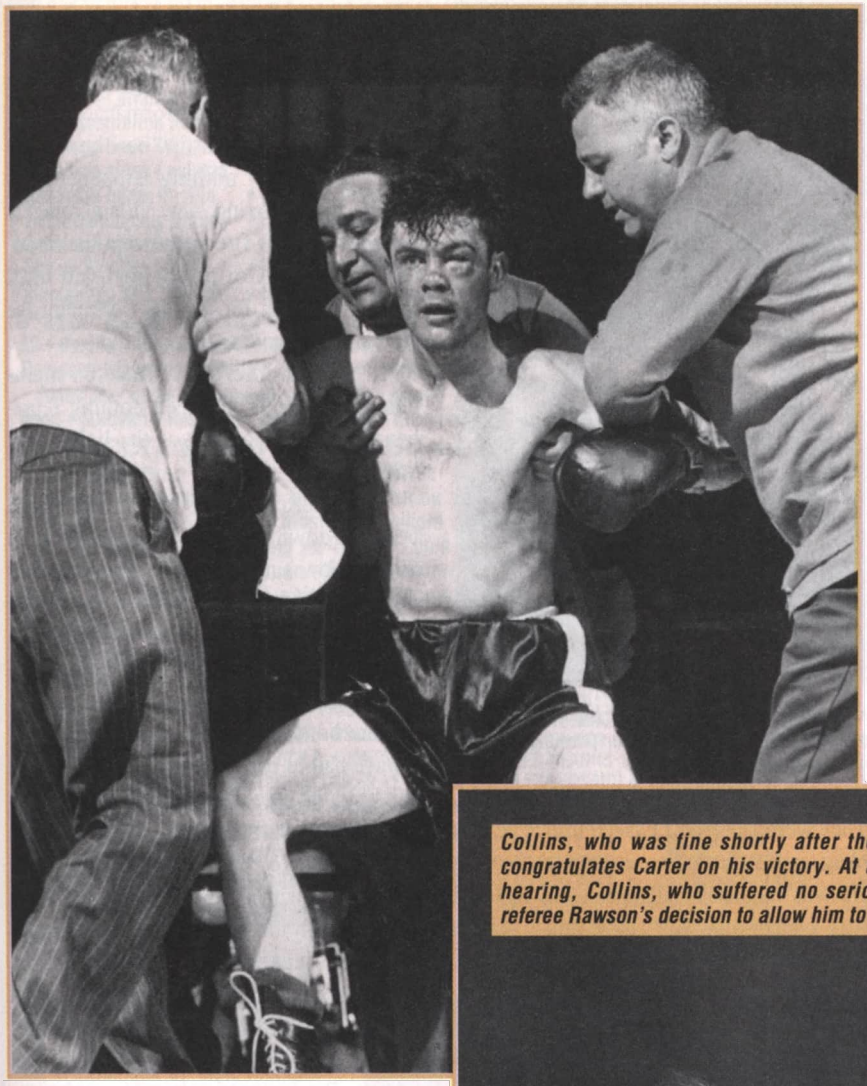
Viewer protest was so intense that the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* newspaper finally shut off the phones in its sports department rather than field any more calls.

A caller to the *San Francisco Examiner* said he had turned off his set because "my wife and kids were crying and I couldn't stand it anymore."

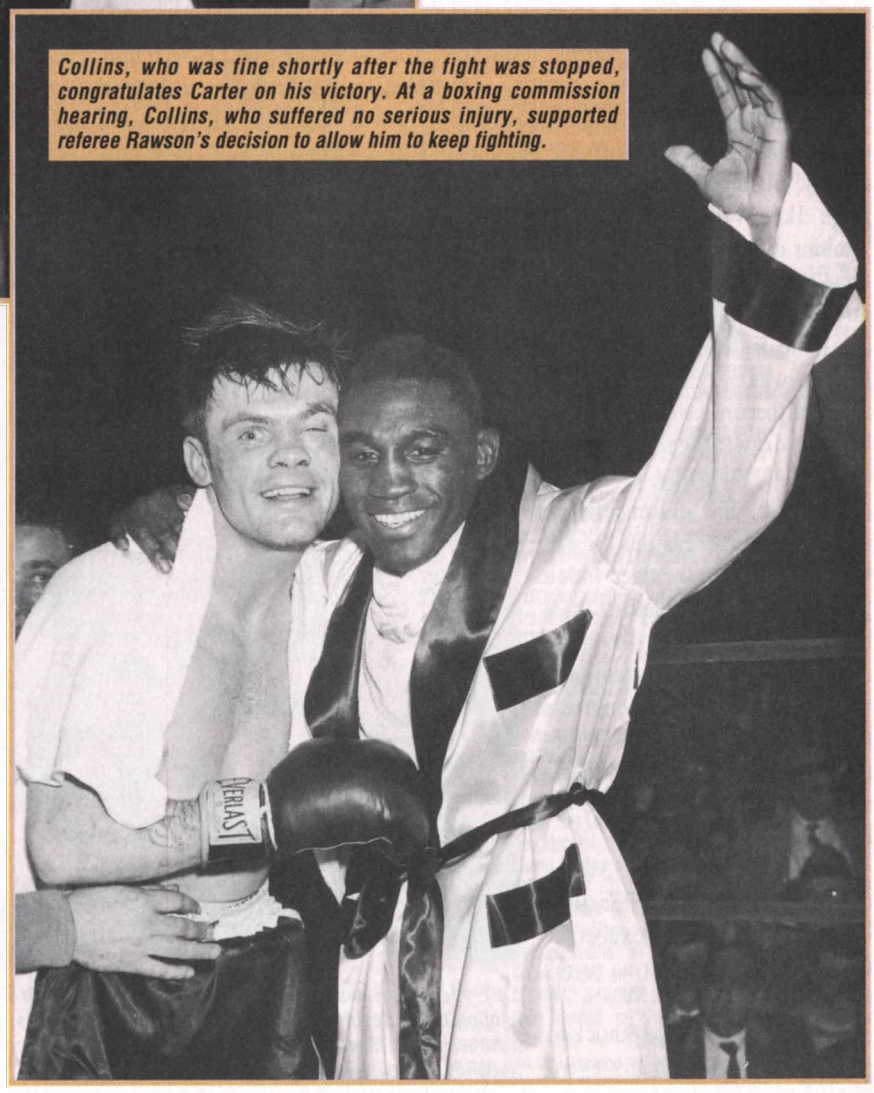


Collins gasps for air during his ninth trip to the canvas in front of 14,000 fans at the Boston Garden. He beat the count and was allowed to continue. But when Collins went down a 10th time, the fight was finally stopped.

One of the viewers who expressed his unhappiness in a call to the *Times* was Robert Christenberry, chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission,



Collins' handlers, who had swarmed the ring following the fighter's 10th knockdown, assist the stricken challenger to his stool. The brutally one-sided nature of the nationally televised fight caused a scandal.



Collins, who was fine shortly after the fight was stopped, congratulates Carter on his victory. At a boxing commission hearing, Collins, who suffered no serious injury, supported referee Rawson's decision to allow him to keep fighting.

who complained that "everything we've done to make [boxing] a clean, competitive sport, they've thrown to the winds ... Millions of people witnessed this black eye to boxing, and it will take boxing a long time to make up for it."

"The worst exhibition of boxing officiating I have seen in 50 years," declared Minnesota's George Barton, president of the National Boxing Association. "If [Rawson] was a referee in Minnesota, I'd take away his license."

That didn't go far enough for a Virginia viewer who telegrammed Boston police after the fight demanding that Rawson be charged with "attempted intentional homicide."

The alleged victim, however, testified for the defendant at a Massachusetts boxing commission hearing held the following day. Collins had not only survived his ordeal and left the ring smiling and under his own power, but stayed up late that night dancing with his wife.

"I feel fine," he told reporters at the hearing. "Haven't got an ache in my body."

Collins said Rawson had been right not to stop the fight, because to the very end "I was still swinging."

That was the story of the 24-year-old Beantown fighter's career. Going into the Carter fight, Collins was 57-10 (40). The New England featherweight titlist, Collins had been recognized the year before as NBA interim featherweight champion by beating Del Flanagan, while actual champion Sandy Saddler served in the U.S. Army. Among his knockout wins was a sixth-round stoppage of former featherweight champion Willie Pep on June 30, 1952, although ugly rumors about Pep's

Rawson (far left) examines photos of the Carter-Collins fight at a hearing held by the Massachusetts Boxing Commission. The commission members are Henry Lamar (center), Otis M. Whitney, and Tommy McFarkand (standing). Rawson was exonerated.

motivation in the ring cloud the result to this day.

But smiling Tommy had nothing against Carter, who was making the third defense of the 135-pound belt he'd won from Ike Williams in 1951. "Collins didn't even belong in the same ring with Carter," wrote disgusted columnist Arthur Daley after the fight. "The lad from Boston was a synthetic fighter who had become New England's biggest drawing card virtually overnight ... It's true, of course, that Collins has gotten off the deck on other occasions to win fights. He is a heavy hitter with a glass chin. But after the first three or four knockdowns, it was obvious to even the most distant televiewer that Boston Tommy was too far-gone to come back. From that point on it was clear that a savage beating was destined for him."

What savage beating?, wondered Rawson at the hearing, offering photos of the exuberant Collins after the fight as proof that, "I was right."

"Each time he was knocked down, I looked into his eyes. They were clear, and I asked him if he was okay, and each time he assured me he was. He was relaxed at all times, not rigid. It was a championship fight, and I had to give him every chance," Rawson said.

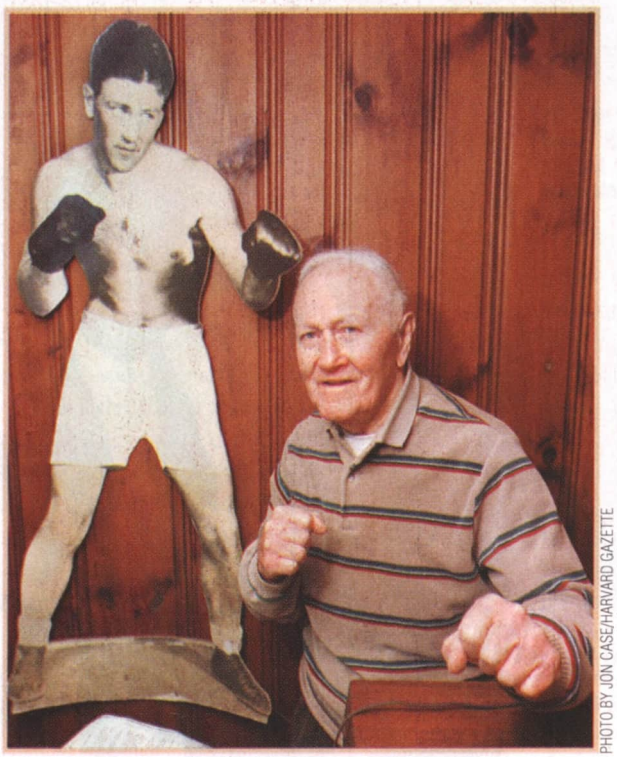


PHOTO BY JON CASE/HARVARD GAZETTE

A 92-year-old Rawson poses with a photo of himself during his fighting days. Besides refereeing more than 9,000 bouts, he was a member of the Massachusetts Boxing Commission and coached the Harvard University Boxing Club for 60 years.

After the commission absolved Rawson of any negligence in the matter, THE RING'S editor called it a "whitewashing on a par with Rawson's performance." There were the usual calls to "ban boxing or clean it up," but nothing happened and, boxing being boxing, new villains quickly surfaced to draw fire away from the unruffled Rawson. Collins, who lived until 1996, fought on for another year after the Carter bout, winning three of five.

In a 2001 interview, Rawson maintained that there had been nothing reprehensible in his conduct of the lightweight title fight.

"I had reffed Collins before, and he had been put down and came back to knock the other fellow out," he said. "When knocked down, he'd get right up and knock his opponent out. He was an unpredictable fighter. He could hit pretty good for a small fellow."

The bottom line, Rawson said, was "I always had to call 'em as I saw 'em." That had been the case on a night 10 years before the Collins-Carter fight, when another Beantown hero, Sal Bartolo, faced Willie Pep for the featherweight title in Boston. At the end of 15 tough rounds, referee Rawson joined the judges in awarding the fight to Pep, even though Rawson was a friend of the challenger.

"It took a lot of courage," said Pat Leonard Sr., a Massachusetts boxing writer and historian. "Tommy was criticized by Sal's buddies and some reporters, but he did what was the right thing."

He was still doing it into his 90s every afternoon at Harvard's Malkin Athletic Center, where Rawson demonstrated proper boxing techniques and stressed to his young disciples what poor Tommy Collins never figured out.

"I tell them they have to stay at it and learn how to box and not get hit," Rawson said. "You can't duck 'em all, of course, but you have to protect yourself by boxing and not go in there mixing it up. You mix it up at the right time, when it's to your advantage." ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Eliecer Castillo W 12 Corey Sanders
Lance Whitaker W 12 Al Cole
Gilbert Martinez W 10 Charles Shufford
Luan Krasniqi W 8 Julius Francis
Rob Calloway W 12 Julius Long
Richel Hersisia KO 1 Zoltan Petranyi
George Kandelaki KO 3 Alexei Osokin
Matt Skelton KO 3 Ratko Draskovic
Matt Skelton KO 1 Costi Marin
Phil Jackson W 6 Garing Lane
Vinny Maddalone KO 1 Marvin Hunt
Jovo Pudar KO 2 Dan Ward
Hovik Keuchkerian KO 3 Joseph Akhasamba
Willie Chapman W 4 Malcolm Tann

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Vassiliy Jirov KO 6 Joseph Kiwanuka
Kelvin Davis W 12 Louis Azille
Jorge Castro KO 4 Livin Castillo
Krzysztof Wlodarczyk KO 1 Attila Huszka
Daniel Rowsell KO 7 Sergio Martin Beaz
Yohan Gimenez KO 5 Enis Boussandel
Giacobbe Fragomeni W 8 Hector Avila
Glenn Fitzpatrick W 8 Paul Smallman

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Silvio Branco KO 11 Mehdi Sahnoune *(Wins WBA Title)*
Julio Gonzalez W 12 Dariusz Michalczewski
Richard Hall W 10 Rodney Moore
Daniel Judah KO 1 Shannon Miller
Hugo Garay KO 2 Alejandro Lakatus
Paul Briggs KO 5 Juan Zabala
Rico Hoye KO 2 Etienne Whitaker
Jesus Ruiz KO 2 Tyrone Jackson
Prince Badi Ajamu KO 5 Ray Berry
Donnell Wiggins W 12 Rodney Moore

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Michael Gomez flattens Alex Arthur in a dramatic junior lightweight upset

Matthew Barney W 12 Tony Oakey
Arturo Rivera W 12 Eduardo Ayala
Giovanni Alvarez KO 4 Jim Murray

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Robin Reid KO 4 Dmitry Adamovich
Mikkel Kessler KO 9 Henry Porras
Mario Veit W 8 Eliseo Nogueira
Rudy Markussen KO 2 James Crawford
Kabary Salem KO 2 Kenny Bowman
Yoshinori Nishizawa W 10 Joel Burke
Rubin Williams KO 9 Tony Menefee
Stewart Moller W 12 Juane Dowling
Librado Andrade KO 2
Leonard Townsend
Tarvis Simms W 6 Ronald Boddie
Alexander Zaitsev KO 3 Dimitri Bannov
George Klinesmith W 4 Jerry Hackney
Ann Wolfe W 8 Sunshine Fettkether

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sergey Tatevosyan W 12 Yuri Tsarenko
Eric Regan KO 1 Jaime Llanes
Raul Marquez KO 4 Humberto Aranda
Morrade Hakkar KO 4 Luperon Ezequiel
Troy Rowland W 10 Andrew Council
Sam Soliman W 12 Satoru Suzuki
Cristian Sanavia W 6 Mugurel Sebe
Mariano Carrera KO 7 Cristian Zanabria
Jose Luis Zertuche KO 7 Eduardo Gutierrez
Paul Miller KO 7 Iobe Ledua
Chad Dawson KO 8 Dewey Welliver
Alan Jones W 8 Jim Rock
Najai Turpin KO 6 Altoria Horne
Jesus Gonzales KO 1 Roy Smith
Jesus Gonzales KO 1 Bobby Green
Jesus Gonzales KO 1 Craig Oxley

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Antonio Margarito KO 2 Maurice Brantley
Kofi Jantuah KO 1 Marcos Primera
Mamadou Thiam KO 1 Abraham Mieses
Elio Ortiz KO 3 Danilo Alcantara
Sergio Martinez KO 12 Adrian Stone
Shannan Taylor W 12 Oscar Daniel Veliz
Steve Roberts W 8 Lorant Szabo
Miguel Angel Gonzalez KO 1
Gregorio Balcazar
Mihaly Kotai KO 1 Josef Brayer
Francisco Moya KO 6 Juan Carlos Villagra
Matt Vanda KO 4 Wayne Boudreaux
Sergej Dzinziruk KO 7 Ariel Chaves
Jamie Moore KO 5 Gary Logan
Andres Pacheco KO 12 Joseph Brady
Sebastian Valdez W 10 Calvin Odom
Thomas McDonagh W 12 Eugenio Monteiro
Andrew Facey W 10 Matthew Macklin
Andrey Tsurkan W 8 Robert Kamya
Toshiharu Kaneyama KO 8
Kazuhiko Hidaka
Lucas Konecny W 10 Aziz Daari
Freddy Hernandez W 10 Joel Salas
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 1 Ahmed Oligov
Marco Schulze KO 4 Danny Thiele
Yuri Foreman W 8 Israel Garcia

WELTERWEIGHTS

Jose Luis Castillo KO 8 Saul Duran
Diobelys Hurtado KO 3 Rudy Lovato
James Hare KO 10 Joszef Matolcsi
Bolillo Gonzalez KO 3 Aladino Alanis
Stephane Jacob W 10 Antonio Lauri
Jackson Osei Bonsu KO 2 David Sarraille
Sergey Sorokin KO 5 Sergey Bashkirov
Rohnique Posey KO 3 Rashad Sanders
James Kirkland KO 1 Russell Jordan

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Rocky Martinez No-Contest 3 Joe Wyatt
Salvatore Battaglia W 10
Antonio Mastantuono
Demetrius Hopkins KO 5 Roberto Ortega
Lovemore Ndou W 12 Fred Kinuthia
Shingo Eguchi W 10 Shinji Kanayama
Eduardo Gomez KO 4 Roberto Vera
Karim Netchaoui W 10 Fabrice Colombel
Paul Malignaggi W 8 Jesus Santiago
Jesse Feliciano W 8 Jermaine Marks
Dmitriy Salita W 6 Verdell Smith
Mia St. John W 4 Jessica Mohs

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Floyd Mayweather KO 7 Phillip Ndou
(Retains World Title)
Victoriano Sosa W 10 Miguel Huerta
Goyo Vargas W 12 Gary Balletto
Matt Zegan W 6 Claudio Popa
Michael Clark W 12 Antonio Ramirez
Yuri Romanov W 8 Steve Conway
Graham Earl W 8 Jon Honney
Martin O'Malley D 10 Leonardo Rojas
Javier Alvarez W 12 Daniel Roman
Isaac Hlatshwayo KO 9 Benedict Dlamini
Corrado Battaglia W 6 Angel Hugo Ramirez
Almazbek Raimkulov KO 1 Rafael Ortiz

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Orlando Salido W 10 Alfred Kotey
Michael Gomez KO 5 Alex Arthur
Yober Ortega KO 3 Francisco Mateos
Janos Nagy KO 10 Julio Pablo Chacon
Craig Docherty W 12 Abdul Malik Jabir
Willie Limond KO 1 Dariusz Snarski
Adan Hernandez W Disq. 3 Marco Perez

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Juan Manuel Marquez Tech. Win 7
Derrick Gainer
(Retains IBF Title; Wins WBA Title)
In Jin Chi D 12 Michael Brodie
(For Vacant WBC Title)
Cristian Favela W 10 Willie Jorrin
Nicky Cook W 12 Anyetei Laryea
Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym W 12
Robert Dalisay
Juan Ruiz W 10 Phillip Payne
Eugenio Gomez KO 1
Thorncharoen Mahasapcondo
Al Seeger KO 3 Calvin Sheppard
Cesar Figueroa W 10 Jaime Orrantia
Edwin Valero KO 1 Alejandro Heredia

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Jose Luis Valbuena KO 9 David Donis
Shoji Kimura KO 10 Saen Sor Ploenchit
Jorge Linares W 10 Pedrito Laurente
Esham Pickering KO 7 Alfred Tetteh
Masakazu Sugawara KO 8
Tetsuya Morishita
Jose Aguiniga KO 5 Gilberto Bolanos

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Johnny Bredahl W 12 David Guerault
(Retains WBA Title)
Genaro Garcia KO 8
Cuauhtemoc Gomez
Katsushige Kawashima W 10 Hosub No
Steve Molitor KO 10 Fausto Rosario
Vusi Malinga KO 1 Lindile Somthi
Shin Ogata W 10 Huyjong Kim
Hideyasu Ishihara W 10
Detchsiam Sishphohdam

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Karim Quibir Lopez KO 5 Oleg Rubailo
Kohei Kono W 8 Teppei Kikui

FLYWEIGHTS

Shingo Yamaguchi D 10
Masato Hatakeyama
Takeyuki Kojima W 10 Yusuke Imamiya

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Ulises Solis KO 8 Lee Sandoval
Francisco Rosas KO 6
Salvador Rosales

STRAWWEIGHTS

Satoshi Kogumazaka W 10 Makoto Suzuki
Sithembile Kibiti KO 2 Stephen Msimanga

BOXING EQUIPMENT
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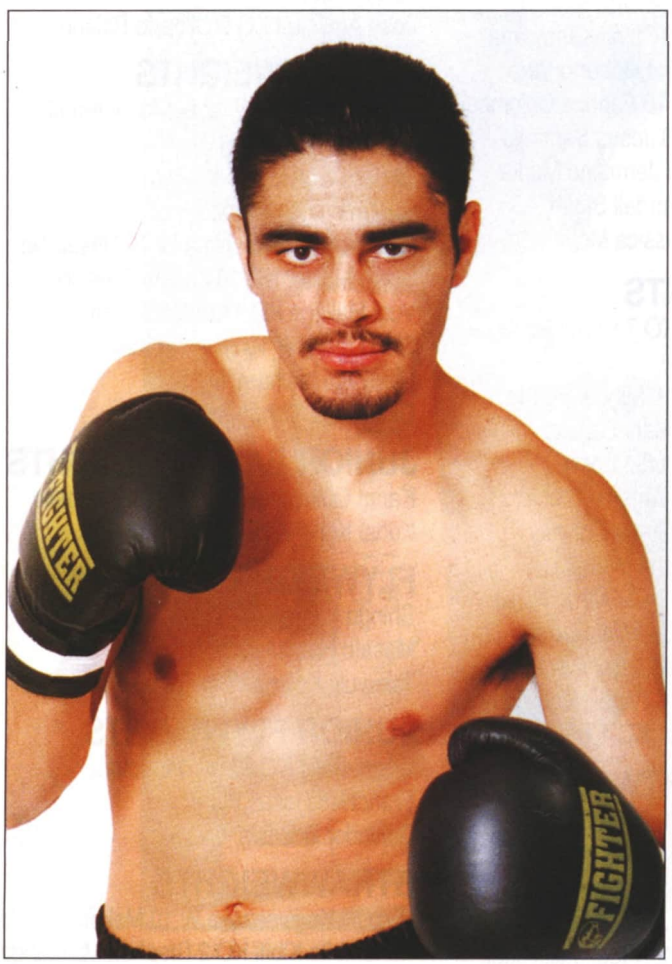
The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

Another one of Roy's retreads. That's all Julio Gonzalez was to most boxing fans when they heard that Dariusz Michalczewski would be risking his undefeated record against the California-based Mexican, just as Michalczewski had risked it against other Roy Jones victims Montell Griffin, Richard Hall, and Derrick Harmon. But Gonzalez was different. Unlike the others, he hadn't been knocked out by Jones. And unlike the others, he gave too good of a performance against Michalczewski to be denied, even in the unfriendly confines of Germany.

Sure, Michalczewski was obviously slipping at age 35, but he was still a heavy favorite to turn back the challenge of Gonzalez, who'd been on the canvas three times apiece in his fights against Julian Letterlough and Jones and was looking faded himself in his post-Jones victories. But, thanks in part to the return of trainer Mack Kurihara, Gonzalez peeled back a few layers of wear and tear and outworked and outgutted the always game Michalczewski for the well-deserved decision win.



So Gonzalez couldn't beat Jones; who can? He instead went and did the next best thing, beating Jones' supposed top threat while doing what Jones was unwilling to do: take a risk by hopping on a plane to Germany. This issue's Fighter of the Month isn't better than Jones, but he can rest easy knowing he's braver.

• • • •

Julio Gonzalez

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Joel Casamayor KO 6 Diego Corrales

Las Vegas, Nevada: We don't get many undercards like this anymore. The Casamayor-Corrales matchup at the Mandalay Bay Events Center was every bit as attractive as James Toney vs. Evander Holyfield in the main event, perhaps even more attractive.

Fans lucked out because HBO and Top Rank put on a competing pay-per-view card the same night topped by Erik Morales vs. Guty Espadas, so Showtime Pay-Per-View and Dan Goossen had to show some imagination. Rarely do we see two top contenders go at each other with no belt at stake. But these two confident, remarkably talented junior lightweights wanted it and even took short money to make it happen.

The action more than lived up to expectations. The two boxer-punchers gradually built the contest into a slugfest. Before it was over, Corrales went down twice and Casamayor once. Some fans were even talking Fight of the Year.

After six rounds, Casamayor was ahead on all three cards, but the last knockdown was scored by Corrales. It was still anybody's fight when it was unexpectedly stopped at the end of round six. During the sixth, a hard left from Casamayor had jammed Corrales' mouthpiece through his lip. Dr. Margaret Goodman said Corrales, who emphatically protested the stoppage, was bleeding so profusely she couldn't even examine him properly.

They started slowly in the first round, with the only noteworthy development a cut over Corrales' left eye from a clash of heads. In round two, Casamayor, 130, Miami, Florida, began to take over with his quick hands and lateral movement, and in the third, the Cuban escapee scored the first knockdown with a quick, sneaky left. Shortly after Corrales, 128½, Las Vegas, Nevada, got up, referee Tony Weeks (USA) deducted a point from Casamayor for holding and hitting. Casamayor lived up to his reputation for doing anything to win.

Casamayor knocked Corrales down again in the fourth with another hard left, and the lanky prefight favorite looked to be in serious trouble. But after catching still more lefts, he countered and put a surprised Casamayor down with a left hook, then dominated the remainder of the round.

In both the fifth and sixth rounds, Corrales, 26, seemed somewhat confused by Casamayor's southpaw style. You can find left-handed sparring partners at 130 pounds, but none with the speed and force of Casamayor. Yet Corrales was still punching hard and giving back trouble when the contest ended, even hurting the 32-year-old Cuban with two left hands late in the sixth.

After Floyd Mayweather moved up to take the lightweight championship, Brazil's Acelino Freitas became the man to beat at 130, thanks to a close, controversial win over Casamayor in January '02. But it looks unlikely that he'll consent to a rematch with Casamayor, 30-1 (19), or give Corrales, 37-2 (31), a shot, as Freitas is now talking about following Mayweather's lead and moving up to 135 pounds. That would leave Casamayor as the man to beat, although Jesus Chavez, Carlos Hernandez, and the new entrant into the compelling junior lightweight mix, Erik Morales, might be interested in trying to prove otherwise.

And, of course, putting together Casamayor-Corrales II wouldn't break any fans' hearts.

Promoter: Goossen-Tutor Promotions in association with Cedric Kushner Productions and Gary Shaw Productions

(10-4-03)

Ivan Goldman

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Casamayor and Corrales swap serious leather

Cruz Carbajal KO 8 Gerardo Espinoza

Las Vegas, Nevada: With all due respect to Espinoza, it's hard not to root for a boxer with 11 losses who fights like a champion.

"Cucho" Carbajal, 24-11-1 (20), who holds the WBO bantamweight title, blames his losses on poor management and laziness in the gym. He now says all that's behind him. Lots of fighters say the same thing, but in this case, it's looking truer every time Carbajal, winner of six in a row, gets in the ring.

His opponent Espinoza, 25-5 (23), was a respected fellow Mexican who showed he's a solid pro with plenty of fortitude. But in his previous outing, Jorge Lacierva had stopped him in the ninth round, and the more experienced Carbajal proved much too strong for him.

Fighting on the Toney-Holyfield undercard at the Mandalay Bay Events Center, Carbajal, 29, just felt out his opponent in the first round, and the taller Espinoza, 22, tried to take advantage. But when Espinoza hit him flush with his best shots, Carbajal never even changed his

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Carbajal snaps back the head of overmatched Espinoza

expression. Nevada judge Dalby Shirley, who never fails to surprise, scored the round for Carbajal.

After giving away that round, Carbajal, 118, took over, forcing his opponent back with sharp combinations and grinding him down. The game Espinoza, 118, appeared to be hurt by each and every punch his powerful adversary landed.

Referee Robert Byrd (USA) took a point from the desperate challenger in round six for holding. As Carbajal recommenced the lesson, it was clear this fight could not go the distance. Finally, in the eighth round, Byrd, watching Espinoza carefully, stepped in and called it over at the 1:07 mark just as Espinoza fell from a vicious left hook to the liver.

Carbajal has lots of losses to avenge, but he doesn't need to bother with that, as he's now in an excellent position as the most logical opponent for fellow Mexican Rafael Marquez, the number-one man at bantam.

Television: Showtime Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Goossen-Tutor Promotions
(10-4-03)
Ivan Goldman

Julio Gonzalez W 12 Dariusz Michalczewski

Hamburg, Germany: For many years it had been believed that Roy Jones' only serious rival at light heavyweight was Michalczewski, who came into the Color Line Arena unbeaten after 48 fights, one win shy of Rocky Marciano's magical mark of 49-0. Maybe the years of waiting for his dream fight finally caught up with the proud Michalczewski against former Jones victim Gonzalez, 174¼, Huntington Beach, California, via Mexico, who warred with Michalczewski every step of the way before prevailing by split decision. His first defeat left Michalczewski, 174¼, Germany via Poland, contemplating retirement.

"This time it wasn't enough," the 35-year-old Michalczewski said. "It's too early to say if I will fight again."

His effort had almost been enough. By the end, Gonzalez was holding on and hoping for the final bell to ring to relieve him of the pressure Michalczewski exerted in a bid to pull out a landmark victory. But the body attack of the California-based Mexican had sapped some of the strength that Michalczewski then needed.

"We had him figured out and we had a game plan. I knew it was going to work," said Gonzalez, who took the fight on six weeks notice and then immediately fell ill and lost five days of training time. "I could tell the bodyshots were hurting him because when they connected he would slow down for a moment before he was able to come back. But he recuperated very fast. He was in great shape and he's a very strong fighter."

There were 15,000 fans inside the arena as Michalczewski attempted to make history. From the second round, however, the omens were not good. The Pole was cut above his left eye from an accidental headbutt, and the gash would require his corner's constant attention between rounds. It was getting sharp attention, too, from his opponent's long jab, which Gonzalez revealed was the key element.

"My plan was to box him, keep him on the end of my punches," he said. "Jab, jab, jab again and shoot the right hand to the body or straight to his face, then a lot of movement to stay out of his way."

The plan worked despite Michalczewski, 48-1 (38), opening a cut inside Gonzalez' mouth in the ninth round and coming on strong in the final two rounds. Gonzalez, 35-1 (22), had built up a lead by pecking away with the jab, throwing far more punches than his opponent, and countering Michalczewski's best punches with solid shots of his own. The exchanges were exciting right to the end as the veteran tried to overhaul the lead of the 27-year-old Mexican.

But he failed. American official Mike Glienna and Canadian Harry Davis scored 116-112 for Gonzalez, while German judge Joachim Jacobson saw it 115-113 for Michalczewski. THE RING scored for Gonzalez, 115-113. Joe Cortez (USA) was the referee.

Promoter: Universum Box-Promotion
(10-18-03)
Brian Doogan

In Jin Chi D 12 Michael Brodie

Manchester, England: A fight that had it all—from a seemingly conclusive knockdown to a stirring comeback, furious exchanges, and the ceaseless ebb and flow that is the hallmark of a memorable meeting of fists—was besmirched by the farce that fol-

lowed in the tabulation of the judges' scorecards. The deserving Chi, 125¾, Seoul, South Korea, was announced the winner by majority decision and left the ring in the MEN Arena with the WBC featherweight title belt, relinquished by Erik Morales, strapped around his waist. But within 30 minutes, the decision was changed to a draw, and Brodie, 125¾, Manchester, England, and Chi knew they would have to meet again to determine a winner.

No one will decry this, so riveting was this engagement. But the circumstances surrounding the need for a rematch were deplorable.

The controversy hinged on an accidental clash of heads that happened inside 30 seconds of the first bell. Chi walked away holding his right glove to his right eye and was clearly distressed. But there was no cut. Brodie suffered a cut on the left side of his head and blood streamed down for several rounds after the action resumed. What most people at ringside were oblivious to was that Belgian referee Daniel Van de Viele indicated to the three judges to deduct a point from Brodie at the end of that opening round, despite WBC rule WC-32b stating that "when a boxer is cut due to an unintentional headbutt … the uncut boxer will receive a one-point deduction." Had this rule been properly applied, Brodie would have prevailed by majority decision—which just goes to illustrate how questionable the judging was, since nearly everyone at ringside agreed that Chi deserved a close victory even without the point deduction.

As it was, WBC President Jose Sulaiman and his fellow officials could not even add up the judges' cards correctly. Sulaiman took two points from Brodie on American official Hubert Minn's scorecard, which was originally announced as 113-112 for Chi. Once changed, the card read 113-113, the same score reached by Francisco Vasquez (Spain). Only Nobaki Uratni (Japan) got it right, with a score of 114-112 to the Korean. THE RING initially scored 114-113 for Chi, which became 114-112 when the point deduction became known after the bout had been completed. In short, a terrific fight had been devalued by the farce that followed.

In the early stages, however, it appeared that the judges wouldn't be needed. Having won the first round, the 5'8" Korean—as awkward as he is big and strong (as Morales attested to after their 12-round battle two years ago in Los Angeles)—hurt Brodie with a solid left hook not long into the second and followed up with rights and lefts and a final right to the body that put the Mancunian on the floor. He got up, but was down again seconds later—the referee ruling this a slip—but Brodie was in trouble. Somehow he gathered himself together as Chi attacked him in a neutral corner and not only fought his way out, but incredibly had the Korean hurt before the round ended.

For most of the next two rounds, Brodie, 35-1-1 (23), was in charge, making Chi wince with wicked shots to the body in particular, pinning him to the ropes where he landed damaging hooks. But Chi, 27-2-1 (16), turned the fight again in the fifth, rocking Brodie, 29, with a hard right and then several more. Brodie's only defeat had been to Willie Jorrin in a challenge for the WBC super bantamweight title three years ago, a split decision that most observers felt ought to have gone his way, and he was fighting now like his very existence depended on it, rallying again before the fifth had ended and then taking the sixth with his sharper punching.

Chi, 30, was hurt again in the seventh, but by the end of the ninth he had managed to almost close Brodie's left eye and damage his right eye. Over the final three rounds, this handicapped the hometown man significantly, though he staged a magnificent last stand in the 12th.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Bloody Brodie takes the fight to Chi

Sulaiman accepted responsibility for the "mistake" over the scoring. When Steve Lillis of the *Daily Sport* newspaper suggested that the WBC had been shown to be corrupt, Suliaman fired a left hook at the reporter, but missed.

Promoter: Matchroom

(10-18-03)

Brian Doogan

Veerapol Sahaprom D 12 Toshiaki Nishioka

Tokyo, Japan: Long-reigning WBC bantam titlist Veerapol, 41-1-2 (29), 118, Thailand, made his 11th successful defense as he fought to another split draw with top contender Nishioka, 23-3-3 (14), 117½, Japan, over 12 heats. It was Veerapol's third narrow escape against his southpaw antagonist, following a close unanimous decision win in

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Marquez belts Pastrana with a heavy right

Takasago, Japan, on June 25, 2000, and then a split draw on September 1, 2001, in Yokohama.

The official tallies were as follows: Mark Green (England) had it 116-112 for Veerapol, Duane Ford (USA) saw it 114-113 for Nishioka, and Herbert Minn (USA) scored it even, 115-115. The referee was Guadalupe Garcia (Mexico).

The Japanese challenger, 27, got off to a good start as he attacked the nervous titleholder with solid left crosses in the opening session. The 34-year-old Thailander was penalized a point because of repeated low blows in the fourth, but in the later rounds, Veerapol had the upper hand, scoring with short rights against the taller lefty. The late rally was just enough to extend his almost-five-year title tenure, but it wasn't enough to prevent a draw and the likelihood of a fourth meeting with the persistent Nishioka.

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(10-4-03)

Joe Koizumi

Alexander Munoz W 12 Hidenobu Honda

Tokyo, Japan: WBA super flyweight beltholder Munoz, 115, retained his belt for the second time as he went the distance for the first time. Ending a 15-month layoff, the undefeated Venezuelan pounded out a lopsided decision over puzzling Japanese lefty Honda, 115, over 12.

Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) saw it closer than most at 116-112, but Armando Garcia (USA) and Ove Ovesen (Denmark) were more on target with their scores of 118-110 and 119-109, respectively. The referee was John Coyle of England.

Munoz, 24, kept pursuing the artful dodger all night, though he missed with almost all of his powerpunches aimed at the elusive target. The 28-year-old challenger went all out in averting the big shots, but Honda, 26-3 (14), gave himself little chance to win with his defensive approach. It wasn't an easy fight for Munoz, 24-0 (23), but the decision was a no-brainer due to his continual aggressiveness.

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(10-4-03)

Joe Koizumi

Rafael Marquez W 12 Mauricio Pastrana

Los Angeles, California: Taking a page from Marco Antonio Barrera's playbook, Mexican powerpuncher Marquez showed the world (or at least the small percentage of it that ordered the Erik Morales-Guty Espadas II pay-per-view) that he could be a boxer too, outpointing the smaller Pastrana to the mild disappointment of the action-hungry crowd at the Staples Center. Marquez' first defense of the IBF bantamweight belt he won from Tim Austin in February had its moments of excitement, but they were outnumbered by the moments of cautious poking from a distance. The fans were perhaps a bit unfair, booing as early as the middle of the first round, but they had a right to feel let down when Marquez continued to box and eventually coast for most of the next 11 rounds as well.

In the first two rounds, the size and strength advantage of Marquez, 117, was obvious against former junior fly titlist Pastrana, 116½, Colombia, but little happened in the way of action. That began to change in the third, when a left-right combination to the head by Marquez and a hard left to the body from the defending titlist seemed to wake both fighters up. They briefly went to war, and though Pastrana was subtly blocking and rolling with many of the punches, Marquez' bodywork easily carried the round. In the fourth, though, Marquez' pace slowed again, and Pastrana outworked him.

Marquez, 28, controlled the fifth and sixth rounds with his jab and occasional right hands behind it, and with neither boxer looking eager to close the distance, something had to change if this was to avoid becoming an all-time stinker. Something did change in the seventh, when Pastrana tried to force the action and thus left himself open to counters, including a zapping right hand late in the round that staggered the challenger momentarily.

The eighth was by far the most entertaining round of the contest, as Marquez continued looking to counter, and Pastrana, 30, continued giving him opportunities. Marquez hurt Pastrana with bodyshots mid-round, then opened up on the Colombian's chin. But Pastrana showed quite a beard, stayed on his feet, and even came back with spirited combinations in the final 30 seconds—which Marquez answered with combinations of his own at the bell. According to CompuBox, the Mexican landed 24 of 50 powershots in the round.

Marquez failed to follow up on his eighth-round success, however, and Pastrana landed the best shots of the ninth, including a flush hook to the jaw. After being outworked for about 2 minutes 50 seconds, Marquez stole the 10th with a late rally of clean powershots, but Pastrana outhustled him in both the 11th and 12th rounds, even if the beltholder was the one landing the more powerful blows.

There was no dispute whatsoever about who the winner was, but the scores of the three American judges seemed a tad wide. Robert Hoyle and Steve Morrow both had it 118-110 and Dave Mendoza saw it 117-111, all for Marquez, 30-3 (27). THE RING felt Pastrana, 30-4-1 (20), made it closer with his late-rounds effort, scoring 116-112 for Marquez.

The referee was John Schorle (USA).

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View

Promoter: Top Rank

(10-4-03)

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Hernandez made for a messy-looking winner

Carlos Hernandez Tech. Win 10 Steve Forbes

Los Angeles, California: Despite looking like an extra from the prom scene in *Carrie*, Hernandez retained the IBF junior lightweight title via 10th-round technical decision over Steve Forbes in an exciting bloodbath that ended up being the best fight on the Erik Morales-Guty Espadas II card at the Staples Center.

Hernandez, a stubby slugger from El Salvador making his first title defense, stayed right on top of his more stylish challenger from the start, banging away with short, jolting blows to the head and body. Forbes, who lost the 130-pound IBF belt at the scales in August 2002, usually prefers to fight on the outside, but played into Hernandez' hands by standing and trading.

"Hispanic fans don't want to see runners," said Forbes, 129¼, afterward. "That's why I fought inside."

Hernandez' relentless pressure and determination also had a lot to do with it. Not all of "Famoso's" punches landed cleanly, but more than enough of them found the target to get the job done.

The 26-year-old Forbes, Portland, Oregon, blazed back with his own shots, and bloodied Hernandez' nose with a left hook in the first. He hurt Hernandez, 128½, in the fourth with a searing left-right-left combination, and for a moment it looked like the defending titlist would crumble. But Hernandez, 32, sucked it up and survived the crisis.

As the fight progressed, the challenger unleashed combinations whenever he had room, but Hernandez smothered a lot of his foe's offerings, as he barged forward, arms churning. Both men were rocked in the fifth, and as they slugged it out toe-to-toe, Hernandez was cut over the left eye.

The frenzied pace and bodyshots seemed to have Forbes faltering, and he took quite a thumping in the ninth. Even so, Forbes rebounded well in the 10th and was punching his way back into the fight when an accidental clash of heads ripped open a large cut over Hernandez' right eye. At the end of the round, referee Pat Russell (USA) stopped the bout on the doctor's advice, sending the fight to the scorecards.

The trio of American judges, Jose Cobian (97-93), Valerie Dorsett (97-94), and Aaron Kizer (98-92), all scored it for Hernandez, raising his record to 40-3-1 (24). Forbes' log fell to 23-2 (6).

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Reyes finally drops poor Cardenas in the sixth

"I was surprised that he stayed in there," admitted Hernandez, who is now living and fighting out of Bellflower, California. "But he had a bit of pop."

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View

Promoter: Top Rank

(10-4-03)

Daniel Reyes KO 6 Edgar Cardenas

Los Angeles, California: On May 31 in Tijuana, Mexico, little-known journeyman Cardenas, trailing hopelessly on points, shockingly stopped Miguel Barrera in round 10 for the IBF mini flyweight title and, in the process, ended his career. A little more than four months later, Colombian Reyes, a friend of Barrera's, took the title from Cardenas and, in the process, may have ended the 29-year-old Mexican's career. But this was no come-from-behind kayo; this was one-sided and horrifically brutal, with referee Jack Reiss (USA) drawing heavy criticism for not stopping the violence earlier than he did.

Reyes, 104½, whose only loss came in April '01 on points to Roberto Leyva for the then-vacant IBF 105-pound title, used his speed and skill to take the lead from the start. Cardenas, 105, was in the fight for the first three rounds, coming forward and landing occasionally, but he was nonetheless losing each round.

It would get much worse starting in the fourth. Late in the round, a hard right hand stunned Cardenas, and a left hook from the 31-year-old challenger sent the Mexican stumbling into a corner. After about a dozen more blows rained down on Cardenas, the bell rang, saving him temporarily. But in hindsight, it would have been best for Cardenas if he'd never made it out of the fourth.

For the first two minutes of the fifth round, Reyes pounded the defending titleholder with both hands from every conceivable angle. Somehow, Cardenas stayed on his feet, and to avoid punching himself out, Reyes took a momentary break. But a few seconds later, he was back at it again, and he kept his fists flying for most of the final minute. Most referees would have stopped it sometime during that round, but Reiss let it go on, and then neither the ref, the doctor, nor Cardenas' corner showed appropriate mercy between rounds, allowing the thoroughly beaten beltholder to come out for the sixth.

Finally, about two minutes into round six, a three-punch combination ending with a clean right hand dumped Cardenas, 30-11-2 (16), heavily on his back. He just barely beat the 10-count, and Reiss had to ask him three times to raise his hands, then let the carnage continue when the Mexican finally complied. Reyes, 32-1-1 (27), unloaded about 20 more punches before Reiss at last halted the massacre at the 2:40 mark.

Promoter: Top Rank

(10-4-03)

Silvio Branco KO 11 Mehdi Sahnoune

Marseilles, France: Persistence pays. After 56 bouts, which included a failed challenge of Sven Ottke three years ago for the IBF super middleweight title, Branco finally found fulfillment in his 57th. Utilizing his advantages in height and reach, the 37-year-

old Italian built up a commanding lead before knocking down Sahnoune and earning a stoppage in the 11th. It was the Frenchman's first defense of the WBA light heavyweight belt that he won against compatriot Bruno Girard last March.

Roy Jones' status as the WBA's "super champion" at light heavyweight diminishes greatly Branco's achievement, but he was still a delighted man at the Palais des Sports, where a crowd of 7,000 mostly French supporters were stunned by Sahnoune's denouement. He had been unbeaten in 24 fights, and the expectation was that Branco, now 49-6-2 (30), would be the perfect foil to extend that run. But from early on, a different scenario was playing out.

The jab of Branco, 175, proved a key weapon. Piling up points with its steady and accurate use, Branco never allowed the 27-year-old Sahnoune, 175, to take the lead as he would have liked. In fact, the Frenchman struggled to gain any kind of foothold at all, and a hard right hand in the fourth further disoriented him. Branco had gone to school on his opponent and it was paying off.

"Sahnoune is dangerous if he can start punching from a long way out, but I was able to anticipate him," Branco said. "My legs allowed me to keep out of the way of his attacks."

Ahead on all three judges' scorecards going into the 11th round—98-93, 97-93, and 96-94—Branco was in utter control, Sahnoune bloodied and swollen around the right eye. A solid right hand landed and Sahnoune fell to a knee, at which point referee Guillermo Perez Pineda (Panama) waved the fight over. Sahnoune, 24-1 (21), protested, but the stoppage was justified.

Branco may be targeted by Welshman Joe Calzaghe in the new year. The top man at super middleweight is expected to step up to light heavyweight and challenge for supremacy there.

Promoter: AB Stars Productions

(10-10-03)

Brian Doogan

Irene Pacheco KO 6 Damaen Kelly

Barranquilla, Colombia: For all of the courage that Kelly, 111¼, Belfast, Northern Ireland, brought with him on his long journey to South America, it was not enough to combat the strength, power, and quality of the outstanding Pacheco, 111½, Arbolete, Colombia. The IBF flyweight titleholder floored his Irish challenger three times in the sixth round before Kelly's corner pulled him out. The Belfast boxer did get off his stool at the start of round seven—but only to walk graciously across the ring inside the Country Club Auditorium to raise Pacheco's hand and signal a sixth successful title defense for the classy Colombian.

At 5'7" and proportionately built, Pacheco, 32, is a formidable flyweight, almost freakish in size and strength. His southpaw stance adds to his menace, and a match against Eric Morel, the division's unbeaten number one, would be no foregone conclusion. Kelly, 30, has sound credentials himself: a world bronze medal as an amateur, the European title that he won in his 12th fight as a pro, polished boxing skills, and real heart. But on home turf, Pacheco made the fight his territory, a Barranquilla battlefield, rendering the tools of Kelly's trade virtually worthless.

It was a grim game of survival that Kelly faced. From the outset, the disparity in the two men's respective arsenals was apparent. Kelly used his guile, his legs, and his jab to compensate, but he could not remain out of harm's way entirely. Whenever the Colombian penetrated his defenses, utilizing his long arms and delivering hurtful hooks that came off his own jab, there was cause for worry.

For four rounds the Irishman weathered the storm, but a fierce right uppercut to his jaw at the start of the fifth round began his demise. His legs swayed away from under him and it was only by being brave and belligerent that he managed to remain on his feet. He made use of the ropes, too, and having been hurt so early in the round it was remarkable that he made it to the bell without going down. But he was down in the opening seconds of the sixth, a bludgeoning right hand removing the last vestige of his resistance. Pacheco then attacked the body, scoring two more knockdowns before the round mercifully ended for Kelly.

"I knew from the first round that he was incredibly powerful. I felt it and I realized it was going to be tough," said Kelly, 18-2 (8). "But the uppercut he caught me with in the fifth was a very hard shot and I was still feeling the effects of that punch in the sixth. The bodyshots he hit me with were painful. I wanted to fight on, but my trainer, Micky Hawkins, made the decision after the sixth. No boxer ever wants to be stopped, but he was looking after me."

For Pacheco, 28-0 (21), who has kept a once-a-year fight schedule for the past three years, it's time to venture into the ring with Morel before the showdown passes both men by.

(9-27-03)

Brian Doogan ■

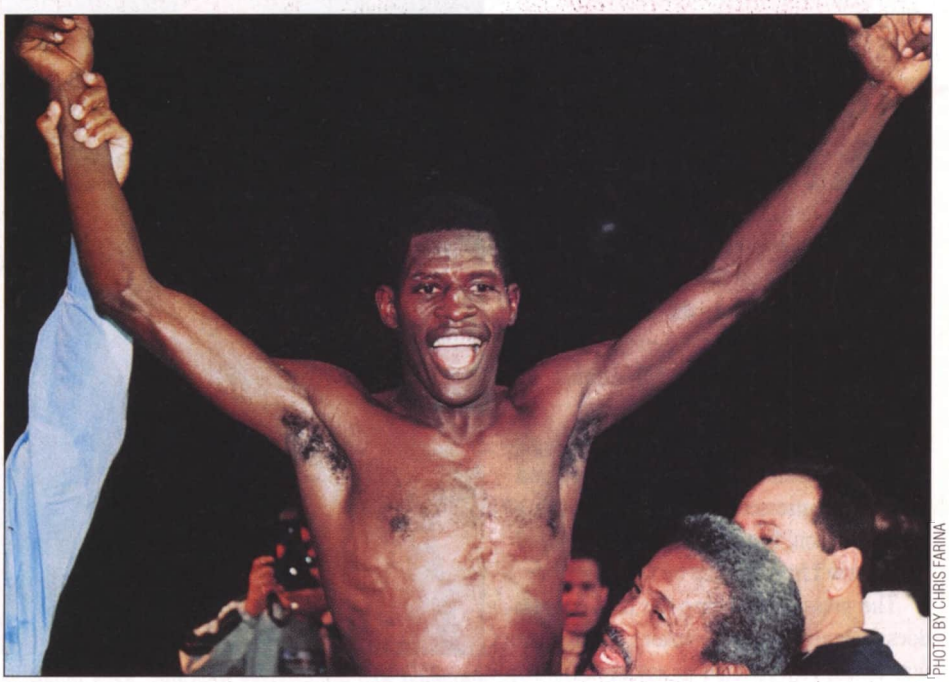


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Pacheco's sixth defense left him smiling wide

New Face

(Continued from page 24)

Gonzales' streak of first-round knockouts was enough to lure Top Rank President Bob Arum to Phoenix to sign a five-fight deal for Gonzales to appear at the Dodge Theater there.

"He's a great prospect," Arum said of Gonzales. "He's a crowd-pleasing kid, and he has the style that appeals to fight fans who support our fights. He's fearless. We're doing all of these shows in Arizona because of our association with him.

"With a kid like this, you never really know how quickly he'll progress, so you can't lay out a timetable. But we want to gradually build him and, at the end of two years, see if he is ready to step up and fight world-class fighters. We'll bring him along similarly to the way we've brought Miguel Cotto along."

Arum also said he views "El Martillo," which means "The Hammer," like a Tommy Hearns, able to attract a loyal following out of Phoenix, much like "The Hit Man" did during his prime in Detroit, because of his punching power. "He's a rough, tough gunslinger," Arum said.

Gonzales is a kid who knows what it's like to want. He remembers the times his mother and father would argue over the bills, and how just living day-to-day was a struggle.

Gonzales' early success in the ring appears to be a panacea for at least some of those hardships. He received a $250,000 signing bonus from Top Rank, then presented the bulk of the check to his mother, Susan. The family purchased a two-acre lot with a $260,000 home, his parents' dream home, with the money.

It is light years from the constant sound of police sirens and the pending danger that always lurked around the house on Van Buren Street.

"This is just the beginning, and it feels good," Gonzales said. "My mother and father aren't stressed out over bills; there's a lot less tension. I'm the hero, but I train hard and I know I have to keep on winning."

The pressure of being the breadwinner doesn't seem to faze Gonzales. In fact, he was essentially weaned to assume the role of a championship-caliber fighter from childhood, when he used to frequently tag along with his father, Ernie, to a local gym.

Ernie used to fight, competing in the United States Olympic Trials in 1988 and again in '92. Ernie had one pro fight, a victory, and then he retired after it was discovered he had a dislocated left hip that curtailed his mobility.

After he left the sport, Ernie initially vowed to himself that he wouldn't live vicariously through his sons, Jesus and Frankie. Instead, he introduced the boys to boxing gradually, showing up at a local gym, hitting the bag or working out with weights. Jesus was just seven, and Frankie only six, yet the boys seemed to like the environment, wrestling around with each other like baby cubs looking for their father's approval as he trained on the side.

Finally, when no one was around one afternoon, Jesus decided to put the gloves on and give boxing a shot. At first, Ernie didn't take him too seriously. But slowly, Jesus started appearing in amateur tournaments—and started winning.

In 1996, when Gonzales was 11, he won the Silver Gloves 10- and 11-year-old 85-pound national championship. He won the 125-pound national title when he was 13, and Ernie started looking differently at his son.

"My father started to take me seriously around that time," Jesus recalled. "My dad always told me when I did a good job. He always complimented me when I needed it, so I kept learning."

And father and son have learned to work together without Jesus getting sour on boxing, as many fighters do when constantly prodded by their fathers to succeed at an early age.

"Oh, my father still worries about me sometimes," Gonzales said, laughing. "Only it's different now. He calls me all of the time just to check on me. I tell him I'm with a girl, and I need some time. But he worries about me starting a family, though that isn't going to happen. I have too much at stake right now."

With his pro career in full-swing, winning an Olympic gold medal is one dream that both Jesus and his father will never realize. Jesus and Ernie would have been willing to wait and give 2004 a try, but felt that there was too much politics in the amateur game, while not enough attention was being paid to truly talented fighters. With the amount of early success Gonzales has had as a pro, not fighting in the Olympics isn't much of a loss now, Jesus and Ernie feel.

"Jesus has the whole package, and that's why he was an amateur star," Ernie said. "He dominated the open class since he was 15. A goal was a gold medal at the

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Promoter Bob Arum raises Gonzales' hand following the 19-year-old's quickie kayo over Josh Peters in Los Angeles. It was the first of four fights in 28 days for the busy prospect.

Olympics. But our goal now is to build a foundation. When the Olympics come around in 2004, we'll already have around 15 pro fights.

"Remember, Marvin Hagler and Hearns, all those guys didn't compete in the Olympics and they came out and did well. I don't concern myself that Jesus is moving too fast. He sparred James Toney, and from fighters like that, we get good experience. James Toney told Jesus that he'd be a future world champion."

Gonzales certainly has the backing, with Top Rank and manager Cameron Dunkin, and he also has the tools. Above everything else, Gonzales is an athlete, as evidenced by the fact that he's able to dunk a basketball despite standing just 5'10".

"They are keeping him busy and he should be quite polished by the time he faces a legitimate test," said Phil Woolever, a freelance boxing writer based in Tucson, Arizona. "In the meantime, he'll build a good marquee record of early kayos against steppingstones. There's no doubt he's very strong, and knows how to box from an outstanding amateur experience. He also has a ton of charisma, which translates to crowd-building energy."

Gonzales caught Dunkin's attention early.

"Jesus is strong as a bull," Dunkin said. "I first saw Jesus when he was 12 years old, beating up 17- and 18-year-old men in the gym. He was a little monster, and you could see his power then. He's a tremendous talent, with unbelievable strength. He has great reflexes. He's championship caliber, and a pay-per-view attraction, going beyond just a world champion."

As he sets his sights on a world championship, Gonzales is finding that, despite the sacrifices he has to make, there are already perks.

"Only a few people can realize what I have now, at my age," Gonzales said. "It's true that I can't do the things I used to. I have to train, and I have to stay focused. But there have been some good things. Girls I couldn't pick up in high school are coming after *me* now. These girls have boyfriends, and they'll forget them for me."

Gonzales must be glad he listened to what that house on Van Buren Street was saying when it whispered to him to get out and find something better. ■

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Alphabet Ratings

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of August 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. David Tua (NZ)
2. Hasim Rahman (USA)
3. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
4. John Ruiz (USA)
5. Mike Tyson (USA)
6. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
7. Evander Holyfield (USA)
8. Fres Oquendo (PR)
9. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
10. Lamon Brewster (USA)
11. Joe Mesi (USA)
12. Faruq Saleem (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
7. Valery Brudov (RUS)
8. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
9. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
10. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
11. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
12. Alexander Petkovic (GER)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Lou Del Valle (USA)
3. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
4. Manuel Siaca (PR)
5. Bruno Girard (FRA)
6. David Telesco (USA)
7. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
8. George Jones (USA)
9. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
10. Montell Griffin (USA)
11. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
12. Silvio Branco (ITA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
5. Eric Lucas (CAN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Byron Mitchell (USA)
8. Brian Magee (GB)
9. Francisco Mora (ARG)
10. Charles Brewer (USA)
11. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
12. Jeff Lacy (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Evans Ashira (DEN)
7. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
8. Jermain Taylor (USA)
9. Wayne Alexander (GB)
10. Derrell Coley (USA)
11. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
12. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Champ: Alejandro T. Garcia (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
3. Travis Simms (USA)
4. Shane Mosley (USA)
5. Fernando Vargas (USA)
6. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
7. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
8. J.C. Candelo (COL)
9. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
10. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
11. Kassim Ouma (GHA)
12. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
6. Vernon Forrest (USA)
7. James Hare (GB)
8. Kermit Cintron (PR)
9. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
10. Teddy Reid (USA)
11. Chris Smith (USA)
12. Hwanyung Park (KOR)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Vacant
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
7. Miguel Cotto (PR)
8. Randall Bailey (USA)
9. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
10. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
11. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
12. Andreas Kotelnik (GER)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Lakva Sim (MON)
4. Juan Lazcano (USA)
5. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Phillip Ndou (SA)
8. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
9. Courtney Burton (USA)
10. Michael Clark (USA)
11. Julio Diaz (MEX)
12. Billy Irwin (CAN)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
3. Diego Corrales (USA)
4. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
5. Randy Suico (PHIL)
6. Steve Forbes (USA)
7. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
8. Nate Campbell (USA)
9. Alex Arthur (GB)
10. Mike Anchondo (USA)
11. Mzonke Fana (SA)
12. Cassius Baloyi (SA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
2. Injin Chi (KOR)
3. Chris John (IND)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Michael Brodie (GB)
6. Spend Abazi (DEN)
7. Victor Polo (COL)
8. Oscar Leon (COL)
9. William Abelyan (ARM)
10. Zahir Raheem (USA)
11. Orlando Salido (MEX)
12. Cyril Thomas (FRA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
4. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
5. Osamu Sato (JAP)
6. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
7. Yober Ortega (VEN)
8. Jose Rojas (VEN)
9. Paulie Ayala (USA)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
12. Nathan Sting (AUSTRL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Vacant
2. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
3. Tim Austin (USA)
4. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
5. Leo Gamez (VEN)
6. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
7. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
8. Diego Morales (MEX)
9. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
10. David Guerault (GB)
11. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
12. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
3. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
4. Kohei Matsuura (JAP)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
7. Jose Navarro (USA)
8. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
10. Martin Castillo (MEX)
11. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
12. Gabula Vabaza (SA)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
4. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
5. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
6. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
7. Damaen Kelly (GB)
8. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
9. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
10. Brian Viloria (USA)
11. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
12. Angel Priolo (COL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
3. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
4. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
5. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
6. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
7. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
8. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
9. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
10. Yosam Choi (KOR)
11. Alex Sanchez (PR)
12. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
5. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
6. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
7. Eriberto Gijon (PHIL)
8. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
9. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
10. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
11. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
12. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of September 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Corrie Sanders (SA)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. David Tua (NZ)
5. Mike Tyson (USA)
6. John Ruiz (USA)
7. Lamon Brewster (USA)
8. Joe Mesi (USA)
9. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
10. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
11. Oliver McCall (USA)
12. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
13. Faruq Saleem (USA)
14. Fres Oquendo (USA)
15. Jameel McCline (USA)
16. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
17. Dominick Guinn (USA)
18. Henry Akinwande (NIG)
19. Danny Williams (GB)
20. Evander Holyfield (USA)
21. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)
22. Jeremy Williams (USA)
23. Lance Whitaker (USA)
24. Saul Montana (MEX)
25. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
26. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
27. Samuel Peter (NIG)
28. Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)
29. Friday Ahunanya (NIG)
30. Owen Beck (JAM)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
4. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
5. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
6. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
7. Rudiger May (GER)
8. Dale Brown (CAN)
9. Louis Azille (DR)
10. Rydell Booker (USA)
11. Sebastiaan Rothman (SA)
12. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
13. Pavel Melkomian (RUS)
14. Virgil Hill (USA)
15. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
16. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
17. Ezra Sellers (USA)
18. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
19. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
20. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
21. Michael Simms (USA)
22. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
23. Mark Hobson (GB)
24. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
25. Felix Cora (USA)
26. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
27. Valery Brudov (RUS)
28. Jorge Kahwagi (MEX)
29. Madjid Zaim (FRA)
30. Kelvin Davis (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)
1. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
2. Stipe Drews (CRO)
3. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
4. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
5. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
6. Montell Griffin (USA)
7. George Jones (USA)
8. Tony Oakey (GB)
9. Jesus Ruiz (MEX)
10. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
11. Eric Harding (USA)
12. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
13. Derrick Harmon (USA)
14. Alejandro Lakatus (ROM)
15. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
16. Zsolt Erdei (HUN)
17. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
18. Michael Rush (USA)
19. Darren Corbett (IRE)
20. Richard Hall (JAM)
21. Hugo Garay (ARG)
22. Silvio Branco (ITA)
23. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
24. Orlando Rivera (PR)
25. Elvis Michailenko (LAT)
26. Earl Morais (SA)
27. Manny Siaca (PR)
28. Rodney Toney (USA)
29. Nick Cook (USA)
30. Rodney Moore (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)
1. Eric Lucas (CAN)
2. Mads Larsen (DEN)
3. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
4. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
5. Danilo Haussler (GER)
6. Charles Brewer (USA)
7. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
8. Jeff Lacy (USA)
9. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
10. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
11. Henry Porras (CR)
12. Brian Magee (GB)
13. Scott Pemberton (USA)
14. Antwun Echols (USA)
15. Robin Reid (GB)
16. Andre Thysse (SA)
17. Kabary Salem (EGY)
18. Mario Veit (GER)
19. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
20. Glenn Catley (GB)
21. Omar Sheika (USA)
22. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
23. Victor Oganov (RUS)
24. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
25. Willie Stewart (USA)
26. Oscar Bravo (USA)
27. Carmine Tufano (USA)
28. Charles Adamu (GHA)
29. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
30. Jackson Chanet (FRA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
4. Wayne Alexander (GB)
5. Jermain Taylor (USA)
6. Eric Mitchell (USA)
7. Evans Ashira (KEN)
8. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
9. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
10. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
11. Raymond Joval (HOL)
12. Robert Allen (USA)
13. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
14. Quentin Smith (USA)
15. Epifanio Mendoza (COL)
16. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
17. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
18. Bert Schenk (GER)
19. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
20. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
21. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
22. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
23. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
24. Yoshinori Araki (JAP)
25. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
26. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
27. Yuri Tsarenko (BELA)
28. Jesse Brinkley (USA)
29. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
30. Anthony Bonsante (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Shane Mosley (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)
1. Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
2. Fernando Vargas (USA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Kassim Ouma (USA)
5. Alex Bunema (USA)
6. J.C. Candelo (COL)
7. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
8. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
9. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
10. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
11. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
12. Raul Marquez (USA)
13. Mehrdud Takaloo (GB)
14. Toshiharu Kaneyama (JAP)
15. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
16. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
17. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
18. Michael Rask (DEN)
19. Rodney Jones (USA)
20. Julio Garcia (CUB)
21. Angel Hernandez (MEX)
22. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
23. Verno Phillips (USA)
24. Nobuhiro Hishida (JAP)
25. Richard Williams (GB)
26. Jamie Moore (GB)
27. Carlos Bojorquez (USA)
28. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
29. Akhmed Oligov (RUS)
30. Tshepo Mashego (SA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Vernon Forrest (USA)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
5. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
6. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
7. Teddy Reid (USA)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)
11. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
12. Michel Trabant (GER)
13. Frederic Klose (FRA)
14. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
15. Christian Bladt (DEN)
16. Ishe Smith (USA)
17. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
18. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
19. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
20. Ernesto Carmona (MEX)
21. James Hare (GB)
22. Kermit Cintron (USA)
23. Neil Sinclair (GB)
24. Joel Julio (COL)
25. Michael Santos (MEX)
26. Michele Orlando (ITA)
27. Chris Smith (USA)
28. Christopher Henry (BAR)
29. Anthony Thompson (USA)
30. Eduardo Bejarano (ARG)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Emeritus Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
6. Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
8. James Leija (USA)
9. Jason Cook (GB)
10. Omar Weis (ARG)
11. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
12. Junior Witter (GB)
13. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
14. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
15. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
16. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
17. Carlos Maussa (COL)

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19. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
20. Eamonn Magee (GB)
21. Alex Trujillo (PR)
22. Souleyman Mbaye (FRA)
23. Michael Stewart (USA)
24. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
25. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
26. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
27. Alvaro Aguilar (MEX)
28. Carlos Mairena (NIC)
29. Samuel Malinga (SA)
30. Eduardo Gomez (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Phillip Ndou (SA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
5. Juan Diaz (MEX)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Julio Diaz (USA)
8. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
9. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
10. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
11. Mat Zegan (POL)
12. Michael Clark (USA)
13. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
14. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
15. Aldo Rios (ARG)
16. David Burke (GB)
17. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
18. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
19. Lamar Murphy (USA)
20. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
21. Graham Earl (GB)
22. Billy Irwin (CAN)
23. Juliano Ramos (ARG)
24. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
25. Courtney Burton (USA)
26. Ameth Diaz (PAN)
27. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
28. Steve Quinonez (USA)
29. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
30. Rolando Reyes (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jesus Chavez (USA)
1. Mzonke Fana (SA)
2. Randy Suico (PHIL)
3. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
4. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
5. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
6. Zahir Raheem (USA)
7. Mike Anchondo (USA)
8. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
9. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
10. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
11. Diego Corrales (USA)
12. Affif Djelti (FRA)
13. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
14. Nate Campbell (USA)
15. Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
16. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
17. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
18. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
19. Orlando Salido (MEX)
20. Alex Arthur (GB)
21. Manuel Bocanegra (MEX)
22. Steve Luevano (USA)
23. Jose Cotto (PR)
24. Cesar Soriano (MEX)
25. Daniel Attah (NIG)
26. Tiger Martinez (USA)
27. Craig Docherty (GB)
28. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
29. Daniel Dominguez (MEX)
30. Yongsoo Choi (KOR)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Emeritus Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Rocky Juarez (USA)
6. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
7. William Abelyan (USA)
8. Spend Abazi (DEN)
9. Humberto Soto (MEX)
10. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
11. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
12. Guty Espadas (MEX)
13. Luis Fuente (MEX)
14. Osamu Sato (JAP)
15. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
16. Whyber Garcia (PAN)
17. Takalani Ndlovu (SA)
18. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
19. Scott Harrison (SCO)
20. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
21. Vuyani Bungu (SA)
22. Jorge Solis (MEX)
23. Nicky Cook (GB)
24. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
25. Angel Chacon (PR)
26. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
27. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
28. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
29. Victor Santiago (PR)
30. Martin Honorio (MEX)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Napapol Kiattisakchocchoi (THAI)
2. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
3. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
4. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
5. Paulie Ayala (USA)
6. Willie Jorrin (USA)
7. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
8. Jose Rojas (VEN)
9. David Donis (USA)
10. Yoshikane Nakajima (JAP)
11. Jimrex Jaca (PHIL)
12. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
13. Pedrito Laurente (PHIL)
14. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
15. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
16. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
17. Art Simonyan (USA)
18. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
19. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
20. Marcos Licona (MEX)
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27. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
28. Sammy Ventura (MEX)
29. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
30. Masanori Sugita (JAP)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Genaro Garcia (USA)
4. David Guerault (FRA)
5. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
6. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
7. Julio Zarate (MEX)
8. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
10. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
11. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
12. Noel Wilders (GB)
13. Tim Austin (USA)
14. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
15. Pete Frissina (USA)
16. Moises Castro (NIC)
17. Vusi Malinga (SA)
18. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
19. Steve Molitor (CAN)
20. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
21. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
22. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
23. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
24. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
25. Akihiko Nago (JAP)
26. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
27. Nathan Sting (AUSTRL)
28. Anyetei Laryea (GHA)
29. Silence Mabuza (SA)
30. Roger Gonzalez (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
6. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
7. Jose Navarro (USA)
8. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
9. Martin Castillo (MEX)
10. Peter Culshaw (GB)
11. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
12. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
13. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
14. Eiji Kojima (JAP)
15. Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)
16. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
17. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
18. Felix Machado (VEN)
19. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
20. Sergio Perez (MEX)
21. Jose Beranza (MEX)
22. Shin Ogata (JAP)
23. Karim Quibir (SPA)
24. Jason Booth (GB)
25. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
26. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
27. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
28. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
29. Neddy Garcia (USA)
30. Alex Becerra (USA)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
3. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
4. Brian Viloria (USA)
5. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
6. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
7. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
8. Jair Jimenez (COL)
9. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
10. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
11. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
12. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)
13. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
14. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
15. Koji Koyama (JAP)
16. Angel Priolo (COL)
17. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
18. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
19. Damaen Kelly (GB)
20. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
21. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
22. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
23. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
24. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
25. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
26. Julio Ler (ARG)
27. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
28. Ever Briseno (NIC)
29. Jose Araiza (MEX)
30. Diosdado Gabi (PHIL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
3. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
4. Yosam Choi (KOR)
5. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
6. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
7. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
8. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
9. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
10. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
11. Ulises Solis (MEX)
12. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
13. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
14. Omar Nino (MEX)
15. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
16. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
17. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
18. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
19. Juan Centeno (NIC)
20. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)
21. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
22. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
23. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
24. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
25. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
26. Bert Batawang (PHIL)
27. Angelo Dottin (PAN)
28. Jose Lopez (PR)
29. Liborio Romero (MEX)
30. Jun Kitano (JAP)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
2. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
3. Eagle Akakura (JAP)
4. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
5. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
6. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
7. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
8. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
9. Juan Palacios (NIC)
10. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
11. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
12. Khulile Makeba (SA)
13. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
14. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
15. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
16. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
17. Armand de la Cruz (PHIL)
18. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
19. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
20. Omar Soto (MEX)
21. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
22. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
23. Francisco Rosas (MEX)
24. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
25. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
26. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
27. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
28. Iwan Key (INDO)
29. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
30. Juan Landaeta (VEN)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of October 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Fres Oquendo (USA)
5. Hasim Rahman (USA)
6. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
7. John Ruiz (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
10. Jameel McCline (USA)
11. Evander Holyfield (USA)
12. Mike Tyson (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: James Toney (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
4. Ezra Sellers (USA)
5. Virgil Hill (USA)
6. Kelvin Davis (USA)
7. O'Neil Bell (USA)
8. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
9. Alex Petkovic (RUS)
10. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
11. Louis Azille (USA)
12. Dale Brown (CAN)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Antonio Tarver (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Clinton Woods (GB)
4. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
5. Dariusz Michalczewski (POL)
6. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
7. Montell Griffin (USA)
8. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
9. Stipe Drews (CRO)
10. Richard Hall (USA)
11. George Jones (USA)
12. Eric Harding (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Charles Brewer (USA)
5. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
6. Danilo Haussler (GER)
7. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
8. Jeff Lacy (USA)
9. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
10. Mario Veit (GER)
11. Byron Mitchell (USA)
12. Antwun Echols (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Raymond Joval (HOL)
3. Howard Eastman (GB)
4. Evans Ashira (GUY)
5. Bert Schenk (GER)
6. Derrell Coley (USA)
7. Jermain Taylor (USA)
8. Bea Diallo (LIB)
9. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
10. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
11. Hector Velazco (ARG)
12. Aaron Mitchell (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Kassim Ouma (USA)
2. J.C. Candelo (USA)
3. Verno Phillips (USA)
4. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
5. Vernon Forrest (USA)
6. Angel Hernandez (USA)
7. Julio Garcia (USA)
8. Fernando Vargas (USA)
9. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
10. Emmett Linton (USA)
11. Alex Bunema (USA)
12. Bronco McKart (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. James Hare (ENG)
4. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
5. Jose Celaya (USA)
6. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
7. Teddy Reid (USA)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Kermit Cintron (USA)
10. Michele Trabant (GER)
11. Christian Bladt (DEN)
12. Joe Hutchinson (USA)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
4. Omar Weis (ARG)
5. Arturo Gatti (USA)
6. Mike Stewart (USA)
7. Miguel Cotto (USA)
8. Paul Spadafora (USA)
9. James Leija (USA)
10. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
11. Lovemore Ndou (AUSTRL)
12. Terrance Cauthen (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
2. Levander Johnson (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Juan Lazcano (USA)
5. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
6. Julio Diaz (USA)
7. Courtney Burton (USA)
8. Angel Manfredy (USA)
9. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
10. Michael Clark (USA)
11. Steve Johnston (USA)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)
1. Joel Casamayor (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Steve Forbes
4. David Santos (USA)
5. Diego Corrales (USA)
6. Phillip Ndou (SA)
7. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
8. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (THAI)
9. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
10. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
11. Alex Arthur (ENG)
12. Nate Campbell (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. William Abelyan (USA)
5. Michael Brodie (ENG)
6. Orlando Salido (MEX)
7. In Jin Chi (KOR)
8. Zahir Raheem (USA)
9. Rocky Juarez (USA)
10. Victor Polo (COL)
11. Humberto Soto (MEX)
12. Oscar Leon (PR)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
6. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
7. David Donis (USA)
8. F. Rakkiatgym (THAI)
9. Fernando Velardez (USA)
10. Art Simonyan (USA)
11. Diego Morales (MEX)
12. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)
1. Pete Frissina (USA)
2. Tim Austin (USA)
3. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
4. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
5. David Guerault (FRA)
6. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
7. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
8. Jorge Lacierva (USA)
9. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
10. Mauricio Pastrana (PAN)
11. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
12. Noel Wilders (GB)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Felix Machado (VEN)
4. Luis Bolano (COL)
5. Martin Castillo (MEX)
6. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
7. Jose Navarro (USA)
8. Angel Priolo (COL)
9. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
10. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
11. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
12. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
4. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
5. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
6. Jair Jimenez (COL)
7. Damaen Kelly (GB)
8. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
9. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
10. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
11. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
12. Wandee Chareon (THAI)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
5. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
6. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
7. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
8. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
9. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
10. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Daniel Reyes (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
4. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
7. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
8. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
9. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
10. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
11. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
12. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, June 1964

I'M YOUNG AGAIN

By Joey Giardello

I don't know if Ponce de Leon ever found his Fountain of Youth, but I know I found mine.

To be honest, it wasn't my exclusive discovery. Other boxing champions before me also found it.

It was a simple discovery—a world championship!

It's remarkable how a title can restore a fighter's youth. I feel at least 10 years younger than I did before my bout with Dick Tiger in Atlantic City last December.

I've been looking through THE RING Record

After beating Dick Tiger for the middleweight championship, Joey Giardello felt he rediscovered his youth. Giardello, who had been campaigning for 15 years and had fought more than 100 bouts, had grown discouraged with boxing and was thinking of retiring before he faced Tiger.

Book and it's really amazing to learn how many fighters, after long exhausting careers, finally became champions when it looked as though their careers were finished. Once they became champions, they seemed to shake off the years and become young again. Winning a title certainly is a wonderful rejuvenator.

I am frank to admit that before the bout with Tiger, in which I won the middleweight laurels, I was becoming discouraged with boxing and was very close to retiring from the ring. I was 33, had been fighting for 15 years, and had crowded 123 bouts into a busy career.

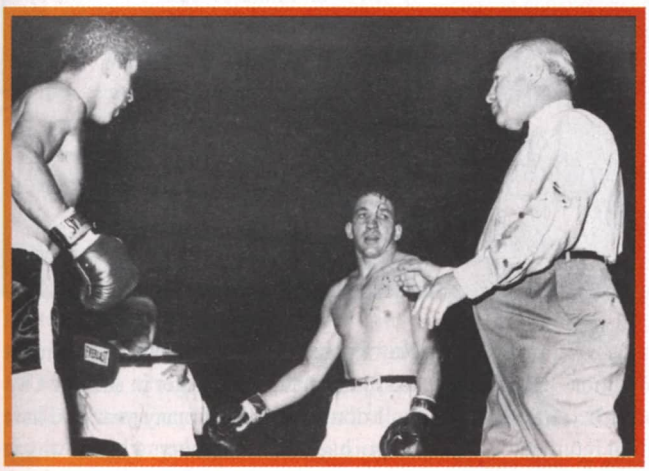
In all that time I'd had only one shot at the world championship, and actually that was for only half a title. Paul Pender had the other half. When I was matched with Gene Fullmer in Bozeman, Montana, in 1960, I felt sure of winning, then I'd go after Pender for the other half of the championship.

You know what happened. Things didn't turn out as I had expected. With his billy goat tactics, Fullmer butted me several times at the start of the fight, and I guess I lost my temper and butted him back. The fight developed into one of the roughest, rowdiest brawls I've ever been in. At the finish, I thought I won, but the best I could get was a draw.

I began to lose ambition after that. I didn't think I'd ever get another chance at a title. I was already a veteran and it looked as though time was running out on me. I kept fighting, of course—after all, it was my business and a livelihood for my family—but I didn't have the old enthusiasm. I took fights as they came along, and it didn't make much difference if I won, drew, or lost, just so long as the payday was satisfactory and I didn't get hurt.

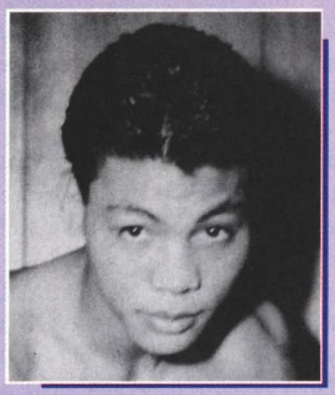
As I look back on my record, I understand why boxing men call me an "old pro." I guess I didn't miss many of the headliners in the middleweight division. Clever boxers, tough sluggers, dangerous punchers, I fought them all, and often in their own hometowns. A payday was a payday, whether it was in Miami, New Orleans, St. Paul, Boston, San Francisco, or over in England and Germany.

When Dick Tiger beat Fullmer in San Francisco, and later was recognized as champion all over the world when Pender retired, some of my former ambition was revived. I knew that Tiger was the sort of champion who barred no challenger, and I felt I could fight myself into a position to become an outstanding contender with a legitimate claim to a title match. I already had one strong argument in my favor—I had fought Tiger twice before he became



In Giardello's previous middleweight title bid, against Gene Fullmer in 1960, the roughhouse tactics became so prevalent that referee Harry Kessler had to warn both fighters about butting and thumbing (left). The ugly bout ended in a draw, with both fighters marked up from butts (right).

THE RING RATINGS, June 1964



Flash Elorde

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Cassius Clay, Louisville, KY
1. **Sonny Liston,** Denver, CO
2. **Doug Jones,** New York, NY
3. **Zora Folley,** Chandler, AZ
4. **Ernest Terrell,** Philadelphia, PA
5. **Eddie Machen,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Cleveland Williams,** Houston, TX
7. **Floyd Patterson,** Scarsdale, NY
8. **Karl Mildenberger,** Germany
9. **Henry Cooper,** England
10. **George Chuvalo,** Canada

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Willie Pastrano, Miami, FL
1. **Harold Johnson,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Eddie Cotton,** Seattle, WA
3. **Gregorio Peralta,** Argentina
4. **Bobo Olson,** Honolulu, HI
5. **Mauro Mina,** Peru
6. **Giulio Rinaldi,** Italy
7. **Wayne Thornton,** Fresno, CA
8. **Gustav Scholz,** Germany
9. **Allen Thomas,** Chicago, IL
10. **Henry Hank,** Detroit, MI

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joey Giardello, Cherry Hill, NJ
1. **Dick Tiger,** Nigeria
2. **Joey Archer,** New York, NY
3. **Rubin Carter,** Paterson, NJ
4. **Laszlo Papp,** Hungary
5. **Sandro Mazzinghi,** Italy
6. **Nino Benvenuti,** Italy
7. **Luis Folledo,** Spain
8. **Jose Torres,** Puerto Rico
9. **Gene Fullmer,** West Jordan, UT
10. **Joe Gonzalez,** New York, NY

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Emile Griffith, West New York, NJ
1. **Luis Rodriguez,** Miami, FL
2. **Brian Curvis,** Wales
3. **Joe Stable,** New York, NY
4. **Rip Randall,** Houston, TX
5. **Federico Thompson,** Argentina
6. **Ralph Dupas,** New Orleans, LA
7. **Curtis Cokes,** Dallas, TX
8. **Francois Pavilla,** France
9. **Gaspar Ortega,** Mexico
10. **Stan Harrington,** Honolulu, HI

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eddie Perkins, Chicago, IL
1. **Angel Garcia,** France
2. **Jose Napoles,** Mexico
3. **Louis Molina,** San Jose, CA
4. **Aissa Hashas,** France
5. **Roberto Cruz,** Philippines
6. **Sandro Lopopolo,** Italy
7. **Rodolfo (Tito) Marshall,** Panama
8. **Battling Torres,** Mexico
9. **Mario Rositto,** Colombia
10. **Bobby Scanlon,** Sacramento, CA

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos Ortiz, New York, NY
1. **Carlos Hernandez,** Venezuela
2. **Kenny Lane,** Muskegon, MI
3. **Alfredo Urbina,** Mexico
4. **Bunny Grant,** Jamaica
5. **Dave Charnley,** England
6. **Teruo Kosaka,** Japan
7. **Paul Armstead,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Nicolino Locche,** Argentina
9. **Doug Vaillant,** Cuba
10. **Frankie Narvaez,** New York, NY

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Gabriel (Flash) Elorde, Philippines
1. **Johnny Bizzarro,** Erie, PA
2. **Jose Luis Cruz,** Mexico
3. **Vicente Derado,** Argentina
4. **Love Allotey,** Ghana
5. **Auburn Copeland,** Flint, MI
6. **Ray Adigan,** Nigeria
7. **Kazuo Takayama,** Japan
8. **Young Terror,** Philippines
9. **Yukio Katsumato,** Japan
10. **Kang Suh Il,** Korea

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sugar Ramos, Mexico
1. **Ismael Laguna,** Panama
2. **Don Johnson,** Los Angeles, CA
3. **Howard Winstone,** Wales
4. **Mitsunori Seki,** Japan
5. **Floyd Robertson,** Ghana
6. **Rafiu King,** Nigeria
7. **Willi Quatour,** Germany
8. **Antonio Herrera,** Colombia
9. **Danny Valdez,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Danny Kid,** Stockton, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eder Jofre, Brazil
1. **Joe Medel,** Mexico
2. **Fighting Harada,** Japan
3. **Ronnie Jones,** Chicago, IL
4. **Jesus Pimentel,** Los Angeles, CA
5. **Piero Rollo,** Italy
6. **Manny Barrios,** Mexico
7. **Mimun Ben Ali,** Spain
8. **Ray Asis,** Stockton, CA
9. **Risto Luukkonen,** Finland
10. **Felix Brami,** Tunisia

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Pone Kingpetch, Thailand
1. **Hiroyuki Ebihara,** Japan
2. **Salvatore Burruni,** Italy
3. **Bernardo Carballo,** Colombia
4. **Efren Torres,** Mexico
5. **Horacio Accavallo,** Argentina
6. **Walter McGowan,** Scotland
7. **Takeshi Nakamura,** Japan
8. **Eugenio Hurtado,** Panama
9. **Leo Zulueta,** Philippines
10. **Raton Mojica,** Nicaragua

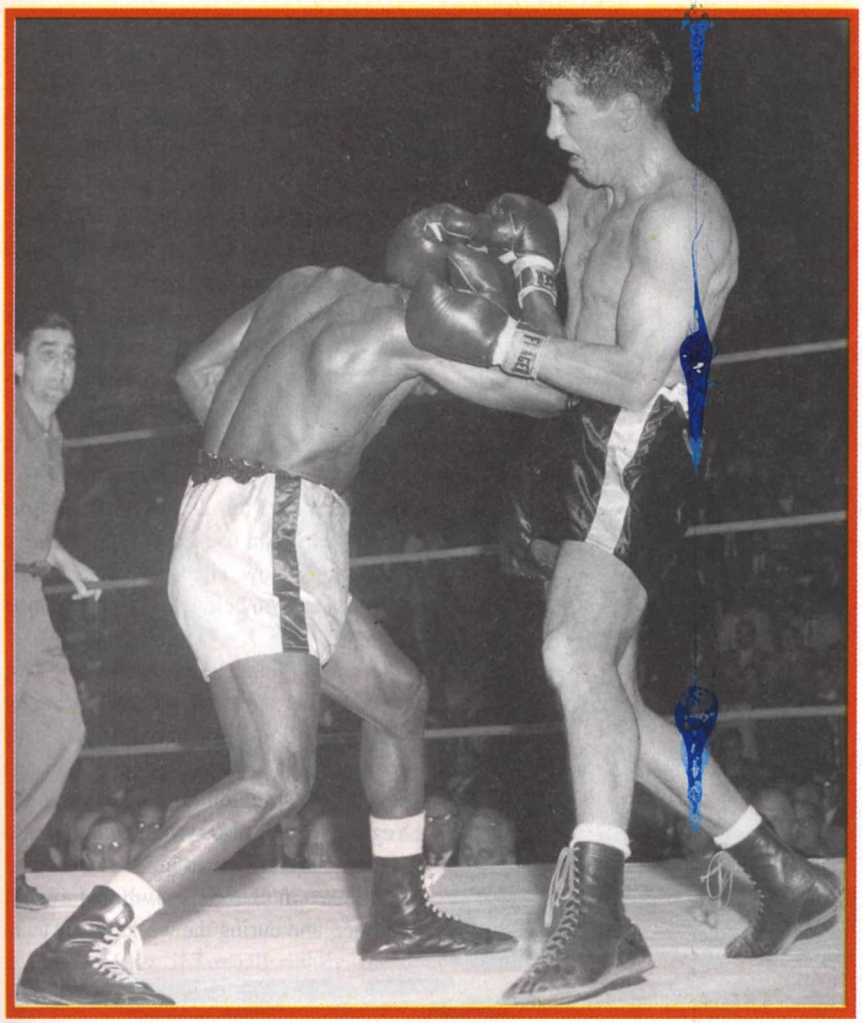
champion, and we were even. He won in Chicago and I won in Cleveland.

Those two bouts had given me plenty of opportunity to learn Tiger's style, and I was sure I could beat him in a championship bout.

To force the issue, I began to get myself into real top condition. There was no more fooling around. I became serious again and my old ambition returned.

You know what happened. I started on a winning streak and capped it by beating Ray Robinson in Philadelphia. That victory led to the match with Tiger in Atlantic City.

I don't know how many years I'd have to go back to remember when I was in such excellent physical condition as I was for that bout. I was determined to win and



Giardello had a good idea of what he was up against going into his title shot against Tiger, having beaten Tiger previously on November 4, 1959, in Cleveland (pictured). He also lost to Tiger in Chicago that same year, and both fights gave Giardello ample opportunity to absorb Tiger's style.

I hadn't been able to get a television date from the Garden for four or five years. The reason given was that I couldn't get a license in New York. It made no difference if I was licensed in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, California, Montana, Kentucky, The District of Columbia—and even in Europe. I didn't have a license in New York, and the Garden made no effort to help me get one.

When I was matched with Tiger in Atlantic City, the Garden was offered the chance to get in on the promotion by donating its TV rights. It wouldn't. The reason given was that it would "antagonize" the New York Commission. The Garden couldn't afford to be identified with any promotion involving me, even if it was out of New York.

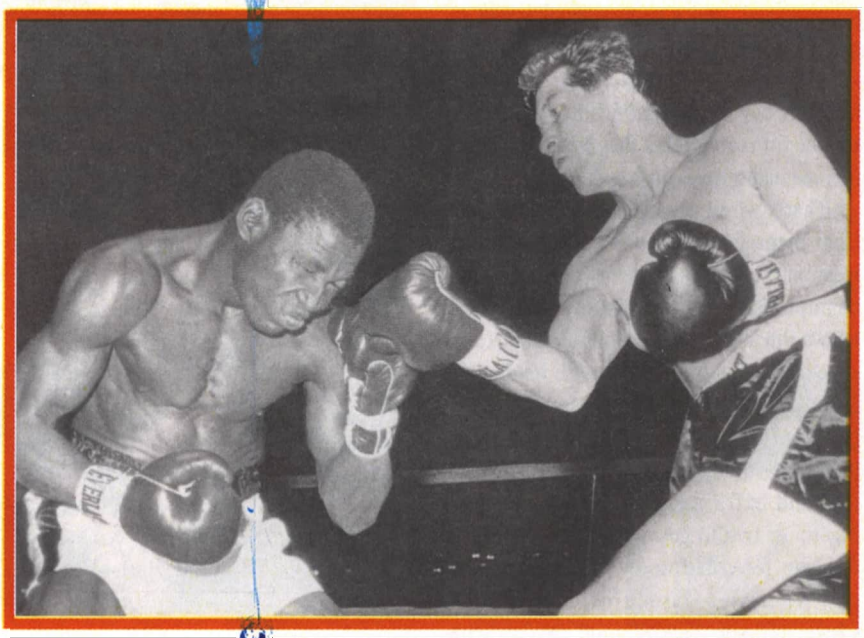
How things changed when I became champion! The moment I won the title the Garden became real palsy-walsy. My telephone rang so often it became a nuisance to my family. I finally had it disconnected, and a new one, with an unlisted number, installed. The Garden crowd made me all sorts of flattering offers, for both championship and non-title bouts. If I'd fight for them, they'd even help to get a New York license for me.

I'm not vindictive. I was not at "war" with the Garden. After all, there's no

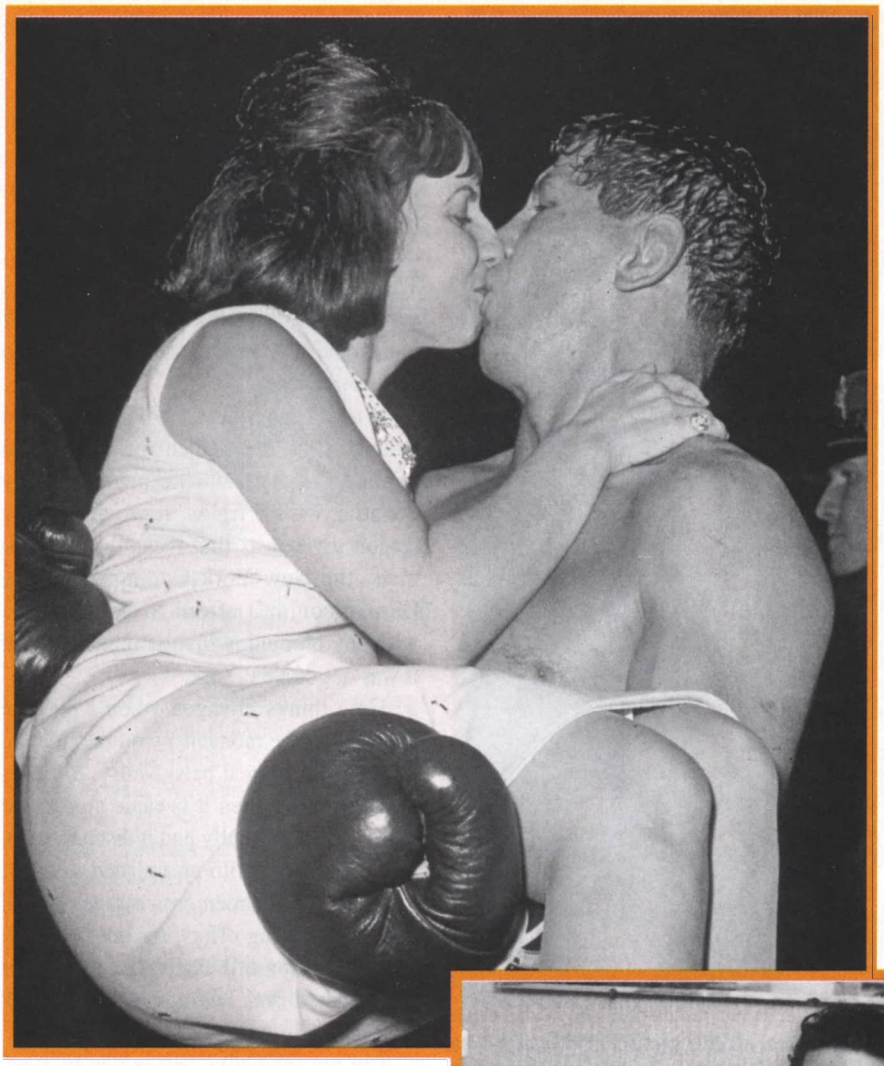
I trained as though my very life depended upon the result. As much as they were rooting for me, I know that many of my best friends and strongest supporters didn't think I could do it, but I knew I could, and I did.

Winning the championship gave me a wonderful thrill, and was the "secret" of my recovered youth. The years fell away and I no longer was a battle-scarred veteran of more than a hundred tough ring wars. I felt like a kid finding a batch of new toys under the tree on Christmas morning.

Being a champion certainly changes a fighter's outlook. Once I won the title, I was flooded with offers from promoters all over the country. Madison Square Garden became my most persistent caller, and it was a tremendous feeling to have the Garden chasing me after it had ignored me for so long.



Beating Tiger in Atlantic City suddenly made Giardello a hot commodity. Madison Square Garden, which hadn't paid Giardello much attention prior to his becoming middleweight champ, was calling Giardello so much that he had to change his phone number.



sense in cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. Business still is business. I'm a professional, and a professional is out to get the best deals he possibly can.

I bore no resentment against the Garden, but it gave me a lot of personal satisfaction to feel that they had to come to me, instead of my chasing them.

That's why I accepted a Cleveland date from them. I realized that I had to have at least one tuneup bout before defending my championship. After winning the title, I took a much-needed vacation from boxing, spending much of my time with my family and traveling around the country making personal appearances. I had very little chance to train and I collected too much rust and extra weight. I needed a good tuneup or two to get myself back into real fighting fettle before defending the title, and when the Garden offered me the Cleveland date—and a good payday with it—I was agreeable.

The only real big money in boxing is in championship bouts, and I want to prove a real fighting champion. I intend to accept all legitimate challenges from leading contenders, but, first, I feel obligated to take on Dick Tiger before any of the others. I haven't forgotten that Tiger was decent enough to give me a chance at the title, and I want to be just as decent and give him the chance to win it back.

We haven't decided as yet just where the return match will be held. It may be in Philadelphia or we may go back to Atlantic City.

Originally, I had planned on the return match for sometime in June, but I think it would be better for all concerned if a later date is set. I can use another good tuneup first, and I know Tiger will want at least one, maybe two, before he is ready to meet me again.

Besides Philadelphia and Atlantic City, several other spots have been bidding for the return bout. Attractive offers have been received from Ogden, Utah, and Seattle, Washington, and I hear that Las Vegas, Nevada, also wants the bout, as do Missoula and Bozeman in Montana.

It was in Bozeman when I fought Fullmer, and during the weeks of my train-

Giardello took a much-needed vacation after becoming middleweight champ, spending quality time with his wife (top) and kids (above). Some of his downtime was also spent traveling the country, making personal appearances—which led him to get a bit rusty and out of shape.

It was a priority for Giardello to give Tiger a rematch and repay the favor for Tiger granting Giardello a title shot. Though he would be 34 by the time they might fight again, Giardello promised that the Nigerian would not be meeting an "old man."

ing in Montana I made a lot of fine friends and well-wishers. It certainly wasn't their fault that I didn't get the decision. I know many of them were rooting for me, and they felt as I did—that I won the fight.

Incidentally, if I recall rightly, the bout drew $112,000 in receipts, which, along with the television revenue, made our little venture a very good paying proposition. It also proved that Montana is a real live boxing state.

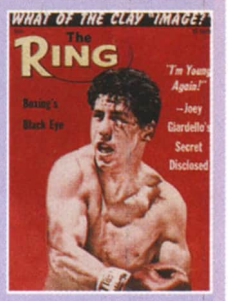
At any rate, I'm in no hurry to decide the place and date for the return bout with Tiger. I guess Dick also prefers a later date than June, and that August or September would suit him fine. I understand he hasn't been able to do much training since he returned to Nigeria. For one thing, he has been expecting another addition to his growing family, and an important event like that doesn't give a fighter much of an opportunity to concentrate on his boxing activities. Then, looking ahead to his future, when he is finished with the ring, Tiger has been absorbed in some real estate investments in Nigeria. Last I heard of him, Dick said that when he is ready to resume boxing, he plans a couple of tuneup bouts in Europe—probably in England and France — before he returns to the United States.

So, at the moment, it looks as though it will be late-summer—August or September—before we get together in our return match.

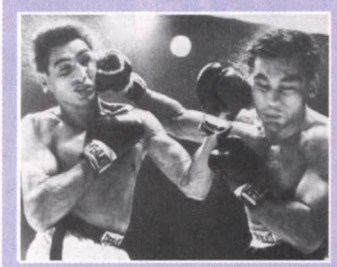
I am sure I can beat Tiger again. In three bouts with him, totaling 35 rounds, I certainly have had ample opportunity to study his style. Our match in Atlantic City proved I had found the right answers. In our next bout, Tiger won't be meeting an "old man" of 34, with so many tough battles behind him. He'll be stacking up against a confident, determined champion who is 10 years younger than the record books say.

Recovered youth; that's my "secret." ■

THE RING, June 1964



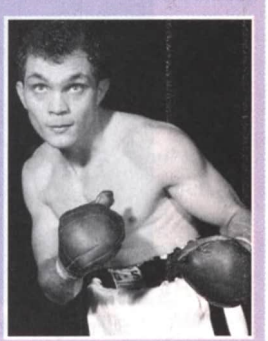
***The Cover*:** Joey Giardello revealed the secret of his resurgence and ascendance to the top of the middleweight division. Beating Dick Tiger for the title restored future Hall of Famer Giardello's youth and his zest for the sport. Before the Tiger bout, Giardello had grown discouraged with boxing and was thinking about retirement.



***Pastrano's Best*:** In his first defense of the light heavyweight title, Willie Pastrano (right) went toe-to-toe with Argentinean Gregorio Peralta before stopping him on cuts in the fifth. Pastrano put on his best performance as a pro, peppering Peralta with combinations and not using the running tactics he often employed.

***Patterson Knocks Himself*:** Former heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson admitted in an interview that he used the wrong tactics against Sonny Liston in their second fight. Patterson said he should have fought Liston more like Cassius Clay did, making Liston come to him. "I became aggressive with him," Patterson said. "I made a fatal mistake. I goofed."

***Anatomy Of A Shiner*:** Before there was Enswell, the dread of every cornerman was when his fighter got a shiner. The cornerman was faced with the problem of keeping the eye from shutting tight, and the only remedy in the early-1960s was an ice pack. Readers were given a quick anatomy lesson as to why eyes swell after being hit.



***Fighter Of The Month*:** Carlos Ortiz received the honors by successfully defending the world lightweight title a fourth time with a unanimous decision victory over Kenny Lane. Ortiz used his jab effectively and had no difficulty with Lane's southpaw style. He put an exclamation point on the victory by dropping Lane in the 14th with a left hook.

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT: DIET & SUPPLEMENTS DURING TRAINING

By Margaret Goodman, MD

In my last column, I discussed the principles behind basic nutrition after the weigh-in up until fight time. This issue we're going to broaden the subject by exploring diet and supplements during training. Without a doubt, good nutrition and training smart are the most important things a boxer can do to enhance his performance. The key to success is to find the best approach for you.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO

Bundling up like Julio Cesar Chavez isn't the best way to lose weight

WEIGHT LOSS AND DIET: Most conditioning experts agree a fighter should go to training camp six to eight weeks before a contest. A serious fighter should not walk around more than five to 10 pounds over his ideal weight. It is crucial to establish how much body fat you have so you can limit lean muscle loss.

"Boxers frequently practice repeated weight cycling between fights, which can ultimately impair metabolism," said Mackie Shilstone, renowned conditioning expert whose clients have included Roy Jones and Michael Spinks. "They wear rubberized suits, cut calories too low, and poorly replenish fluids during and after training.

"Mike McCallum and Frank Tate fought an uphill battle in weight loss by slowing their metabolism, causing serious electrolyte fluid shifts. Frank would lose the same 26 pounds over and over again. Having an extended training camp due to excess weight is not in a fighter's best interest."

Weight loss for a boxer should not exceed two pounds a week. This can be accomplished by decreasing your daily calorie intake by 500 calories and at the same time increasing your exercise capacity by 500 calories. Each meal should be made up of 40 percent protein, 30 percent fat, and 30 percent carbohydrates. Lower glycemic food (lower sugar content) such as sweet potatoes will stabilize insulin levels and produce fat mobilization.

Plan your meals and eat them approximately the same time every day. This mandatory routine will enable you to control your calorie intake, prevent hunger, and improve digestion. Vivian Harris' conditioning guru, "Scooter" Honig, believes that fighters eat to satisfy hunger instead of satisfying their needs.

"I recommend boxers eat four to six small meals throughout the day," said Honig. "This gives the body a constant supply of energy while preventing hunger and overeating."

Over-training and being at your ideal weight too early can lead to a rebound effect whereby a fighter actually gains weight by the end of camp. Shilstone suggests a fighter should not be more than three pounds over their ideal weight the week of the fight.

"I soon found that 18-inch biceps are not the key to power. It's all

George Benton tops off Joe Frazier's fluid level

in the diet," said heavyweight Jameel McCline, who claims he's "cerebral" when it comes to conditioning and diet. "The day training camp starts is the day I cut out sugars and sodium. Not enough heavyweights watch their intake. The proper foods can prevent swelling, bruising, and bleeding. Of course, it's a sacrifice. I see these guys eating fried rice while I eat my brown rice, but it is your job to be fit."

Dr. Flip Homansky favors common sense: "A fighter needs fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, whole grain bread, and a moderate amount of protein. It is not that complicated."

FLUIDS: By the time a boxer is thirsty, he is already dehydrated. Water will help regulate your body temperature, carry nutrients, remove waste, and lubricate your joints while protecting your tissue and organs. Shilstone recommends a boxer drink one-half to two-thirds of an ounce of water daily for every pound of body weight.

"Drying out in a sauna, or water deprivation, may cause dehydration, lead to muscle cramps, decrease anaerobic power, elevate the heart rate, and lead to heat exhaustion," said Honig.

If a fighter is retaining water, he needs to drink more. Water retention is a protective mechanism your body uses to hang on to every drop. It enables you to release excess fluid. So, drinking water can be the simplest way to lose weight. Training sessions lasting longer than 60 to 90 minutes should include electrolytes and some carbohydrates. However, all experts agree that drinks like Gatorade, while useful after a weigh-in, have too high a sugar content for a training boxer.

SUPPLEMENTS: Supplemental needs vary from fighter to fighter. Listed below are a few of the most commonly available ones recommended by our conditioning experts:

•Daily multiple vitamin and mineral tablet *plus*:

•Vitamin C—improves tissue repair and enhances immunity

•Vitamin E—assists oxygen utilization (should be discontinued within 72 hours of a contest as it can prolong bleeding time and make it tougher to stop a cut. Other antioxidants include green tea extract and Selenium.)

•Vitamin B-complex—limits physical stress (especially if red meat intake is limited)

•Branched Chain Amino Acids—important for muscle recovery

•L-Carnitine—fires the system and enhances fat metabolism

•Co-enzyme Q—enhances cardiac function

•Iron—for menstruating women

Honig's favorites include Flaxseed oil, used to improve stamina, and glutamine (an amino acid), believed to increase immunity and prevent muscle breakdown. A popular protein supplement drink for Harris and McCline is MetMax by Champion Nutrition. However, when competing with supplements, make certain they are legally allowed, safe, and individually catered to your training needs.

Lastly, be informed. What is right for your opponent may not be right for you. Listen to your body's nutritional needs and adopt an eating schedule that makes you feel good. It would be nice to have a conditioning expert on your team, but if that is not in your budget, sound nutritional advice is available at bookstores, the library, or on the Internet. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19304

THE A, B, C & DEAS OF BOXING

By Tommy Deas

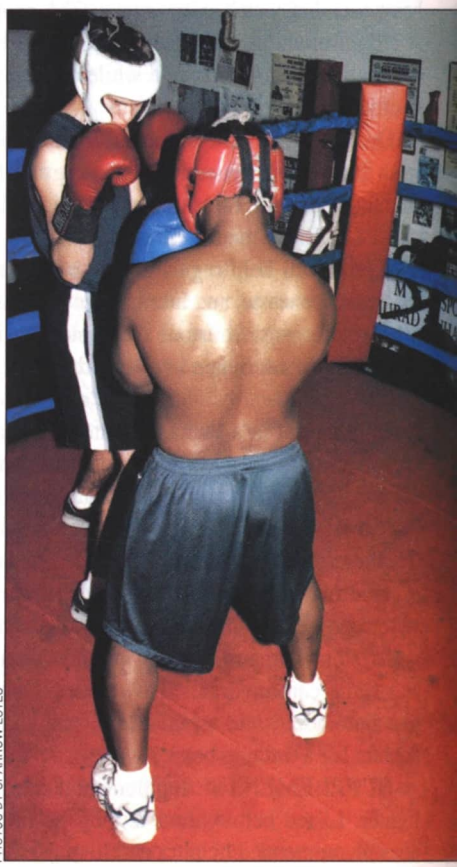
CUTTING OFF THE RING

You've watched the world's best fighters and read about them in this magazine, and now you want to give boxing a try, or at least learn a little more about the mechanics of the sport. Welcome to THE RING'S bi-monthly instructional feature on boxing's basics. Bear in mind, the techniques described here are just one of many approaches to the Sweet Science. The most important thing is to find a good coach and follow his instructions. All instructions on these pages are geared for an orthodox, or right-handed, stance. If you are left-handed, merely turn everything around.

A moving target is always more difficult to hit, which is something you have probably already discovered if you have stepped into the ring to spar with or fight against someone who utilizes good lateral movement. Fighters with superior footwork can be frustrating to deal with because they do not give their opponents the opportunity to set up their punches, plant their feet, and fire away.

The solution to this problem is cutting off the ring. If you find yourself in a situation where you need to pin down an elusive opponent, knowing the principles of cutting off the ring can give you a chance to corner your foe and impose your offense on him. If you do not learn how to cut off the ring, you will find yourself constantly following the fleet-footed opponent around and falling into the traps he creates. A much better alternative is to use some footwork of your own to change the terms of battle.

Once you have the proper stance, the basics of ring movement are rather simple. To move to the left, step in that direction with your left foot first. Once the ball of that foot hits the canvas, slide the right foot over until it is back in place at the proper distance, bringing your upper body along as you step. To keep moving in that direction, repeat that move over and over. To move to the right, step sideways in that direction with your right foot, then slide the left over into place once the right foot hits the floor.



PHOTOS BY SPARROW ESTES

There are two basic things to remember: 1) never cross your legs; and 2) don't step forward with the right foot when you are moving to the right.

If you get hit with your legs crossed, even a glancing blow stands a chance of scoring a knockdown when you trip over your own feet. If you step forward with the right foot, your feet will be squared up so you can easily be knocked down or off-balance, because you do not have anything behind you to catch your weight if you are moved by the force of a punch.

Once you have learned those basics of footwork, you can begin to apply them to the technique of cutting off the ring. Those fundamental steps, with a few minor modifications, will help you close the distance on an opponent who utilizes side-to-side movement.

Your best ally in cutting off the ring is the ring itself. As you have surely noticed, it is square, not round, and its boundaries are strictly enforced by the ropes and the corners. These can be used to your advantage when trying to cut off the ring. An opponent who moves side to side cannot, obviously, keep going in either direction indefinitely without facing the

necessity of having to turn those corners. That gives you the best chance to pin him down.

As the aggressor against an opponent moving laterally, you will assume a posture that puts your back toward the middle of the ring, while your opponent's back is closer to the ropes. First, you need to keep stepping over in the direction your opponent is moving—to your left if he is moving to his right, for instance—changing directions as he does. You want to overstep just a little, so you are getting a little ahead of where he wants to go. This is a subtle art, because if you overstep too far, he can change directions and leave you all alone. Cutting off the ring requires patience, and must be done incrementally to be effective against an opponent who knows how to elude.

The moving target will be basically trying to go in circles around you. You want to make your move when your opponent has a corner behind him. When he is in this position, step both forward and to the left when he is moving to his right, cutting the distance between you and your target. If you are able to step close enough to the ropes behind him, you will leave him without enough room to get by you without moving into punching range, which is where you want him. If he chooses to keep moving in the same direction, you should be able to engage him in an exchange of punches, and your mission is accomplished.

If your adversary intends to remain elusive, however, he will be forced to move back to his left. When he does this, you need to swiftly slide over a step or two to your right, moving over far enough to again use the ropes to force the opponent to make a choice. He can keep going in that direction and face you in battle, or he can try to cut back the other way again. If he changes direction again, step forward and to the left again.

Pretty soon, because of the geometry of the ring, your opponent will run out of room. The corner behind him means there are ropes to either side, and you will be able to cut off his opportunities to retreat by repeating the above steps over and over. Once he is literally backed into a corner, you have left him with no choice but to stand and fight or cover up and absorb your blows.

This process is not as simple as it sounds, because a good mover will keep changing directions often enough to keep you from setting yourself in position to make the step forward and over when he has his back to a corner. You must remain persistent and keep working for this opportunity.

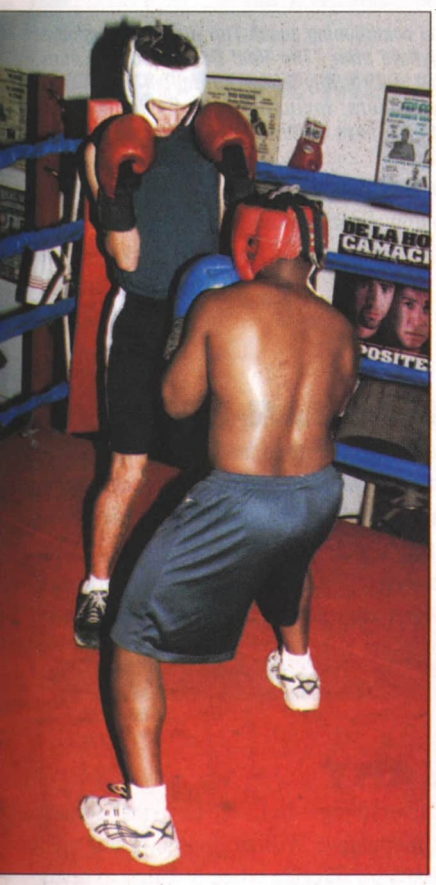
In taking an aggressive approach and trying to cut off the ring, you may find yourself putting more weight on your front foot than is usually the case, leaning your upper body forward from the waist to try to get a little close to the intended target. This is perfectly natural, but you want to take caution not to bend over too far, because this presents your own head as an easy target and prevents you from getting off properly leveraged punches. A good rule of thumb, always, is to never let your head get in front of your left knee.

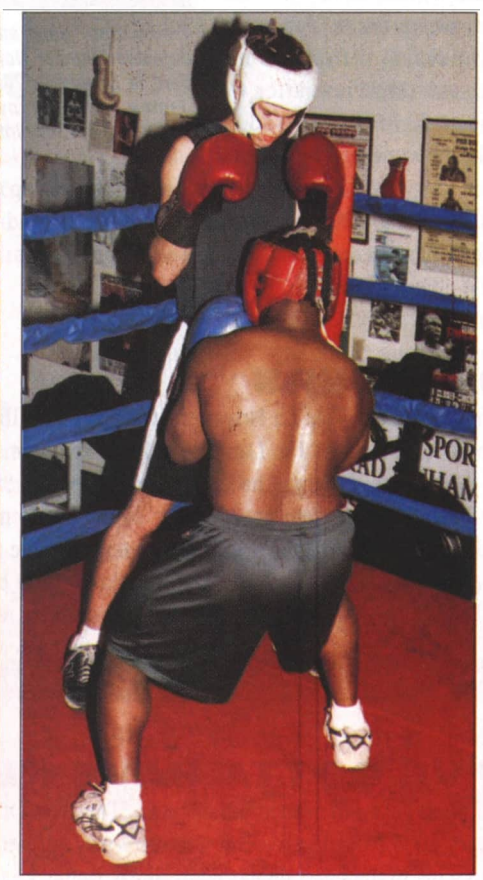
You also don't want to rush ahead too fast in trying to cut off the opponent. This, again, leaves you without a chance to set your feet to punch properly, and can give you so much momentum that you actually move on past your opponent and make his job easier. Keep reminding yourself that cutting off the ring takes a patient approach. Once you have pinned your opponent down a time or two, you will find it gets easier and easier because you are beginning to recognize the patterns of his movement and the timing of his footwork.

The best way to practice cutting off the ring is to start working alone against an imaginary opponent. Practice moving to your left and right as you see your imaginary opponent moving around the ring, sliding over to each side as if he were changing directions, then start making your move forward and cutting the distance when you have a corner lined up in your sites. Start slowly at first, one step at a time, then pick up speed.

After you have done this long enough to get comfortable in your own mind with the process, start practicing with a partner. Pair off and take turns, with one opponent playing the mover and the other working at cutting off the ring. When you catch the opponent in a corner, back off and start over again. This should serve to make you both better at both roles. ■

Tommy Deas is a sportswriter for the Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News and a trainer of professional and amateur boxers.





Amateur light heavyweight Gundrick King (back to camera) demonstrates how to cut off the ring against fellow southpaw Benjamin Kidd by stepping to his right with his lead foot, sliding over, and trapping Kidd in the corner.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

HEARTFELT APPEALS

I am writing this letter to Evander Holyfield. As one of your biggest fans, I'm asking you to please retire. No one wants to see you get hurt. You have nothing to prove. You have defeated the biggest names in the cruiserweight and heavyweight divisions over the last 16 years. You are already a Hall of Famer. Please, on the behalf of all your fans, let it go.

JAKE DAVIS
Plainfield, NJ

Can someone please sit Evander Holyfield down and talk to him? I mean really talk to him. He sounds like he's dragging his tongue already. Somebody, please stop Evander before another legend gets taken away from us.

MICHAEL PIMENTEL
michaelpimentel@netzero.com

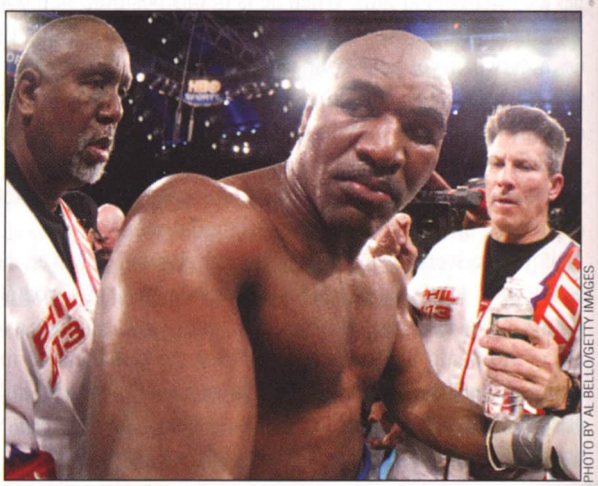


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Trainer Don Turner and conditioning coach Tim Hallmark comfort a dejected Evander Holyfield after "The Real Deal's" loss to Chris Byrd in December 2002. Since Holyfield's subsequent TKO loss to James Toney, many readers, including Jake Davis, Michael Pimentel, and Joey Intravia, have written to urge their hero to retire.

Evander, please retire. You are so obviously in denial, it frightens me. Watching your interview after the James Toney fight was so sad. It sounded like the same talk Julio Cesar Chavez used to spread after his last few fights. It's nothing new from you either. We heard the same thing after your poor showings against Lennox Lewis and John Ruiz. Evander, you are one of the most heroic fighters of any era. Don't kill all the memories. Retire now!

JOEY INTRAVIA
Bethpage, NY

HBO HOMERS

Watching the Mosley-De La Hoya rematch, I was totally disappointed with the manner in which the HBO broadcast team of Jim Lampley, Larry Merchant, George Foreman, and Harold Lederman conducted themselves. Foreman had the nerve to say that "the fix was in" and that "someone had it in for Bob Arum." Those were pretty strong comments to make, especially when most of the public attending the event saw something totally different than the fans watching at home.

It's time for the HBO broadcast teams to do like the broadcasters of old, and stay neutral and unbiased. I don't need them to tell me who is winning. Moreover, these men never refer to their comments as "my opinion." It's always stated as a fact. Clean it up, HBO.

DAVID SURGICK
San Jose, CA

YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE HEART

I thought you guys did a great job on your "The Best Of Everything—In Every Division" section in the January 2004 RING EXTRA. But you were way off when you gave William Joppy the nod over Bernard Hopkins in the heart department. Philly fighters have a lot of pride when it comes to heart.

Ask any boxing person to explain what makes a Philadelphia fighter, and they are going to talk about heart. Joe Frazier, Bennie Briscoe, Matthew Saad Muhammad, Cyclone Hart—the list goes on and on. Hopkins has fought and bullied some very rugged fighters, including Felix Trinidad, Antwun Echols, and Keith Holmes. When Trinidad touched Joppy, he crumbled. Come on, guys. This one hurt a little.

MIKE MANSON
Philadelphia, PA

WRIGHT IS WRONG

I'm completely turned off when Winky Wright runs around telling everyone who will listen that nobody wants to fight him. It reminds me of the neighborhood bum saying that there are no jobs. This is an excuse to con his way into a big money fight against an elite fighter and to cash in. Wright loses a close decision to Fernando Vargas, then says everybody is avoiding him because of his ability. If Wright has so much ability, why couldn't he stop the glass-jawed Vargas? Every other elite fighter Vargas has fought (Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad) did.

Instead of proving his worthiness for a big fight by facing, say, Vernon Forrest or Bernard Hopkins, Wright chooses instead to fight the limited Bronco McKart three times. He even won Trinidad's vacated belt by besting the pitifully ordinary Robert Frazier. Throw in the fact that Wright is a southpaw with no punch who was even quoted as saying "If they paid me more money, I would give them knockouts." How ridiculous does that sound? Doesn't Wright know that knockouts create public demand for big money fights?

ROGER RAMPAGE
Charlotte, NC

SELECTIVE MEMORY

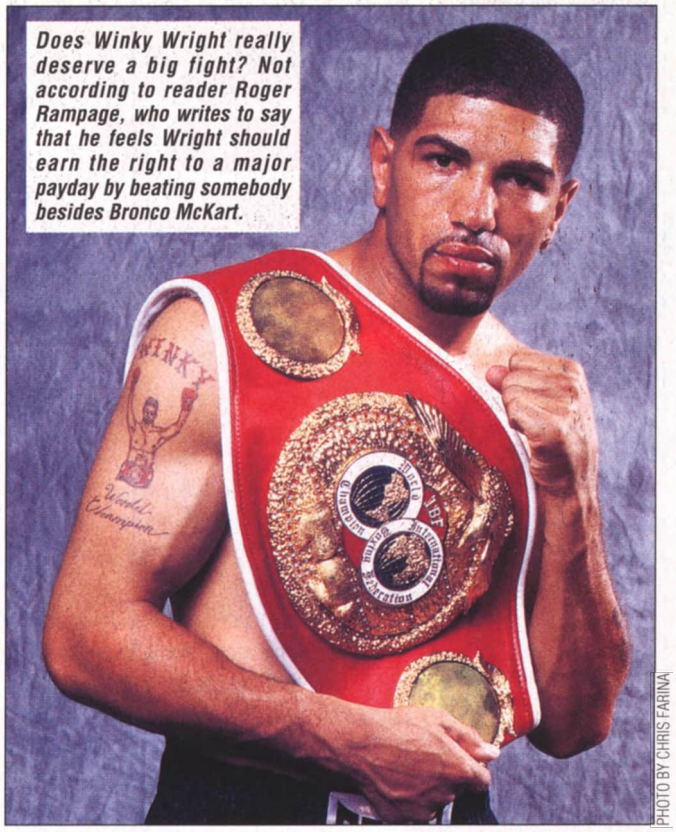
After reading "THE RING Update" on Curtis Cokes in the December 2003 issue, it appears that Cokes is another old-timer who can't admit to losing. Gypsy Joe Harris completely befuddled this supposed Hall of Famer. Cokes could not lay a glove on him, and yet thinks he won. The unanimous verdict in Harris' favor was right on the money.

ED ZIEMELIS
Buck679@juno.com

PAY-PER-PAUPER

I'd like to give a big round of applause to ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* for running consistently entertaining shows on basic cable, whereas HBO and Showtime try to sell us pay-per-view cards every couple of weeks. Most people have a hard time paying one pay-per-view fee per month, much less two. HBO is on such a money-hungry run, they even charged for Erik Morales-Guty Espadas. And do they really think Roy Jones vs. Antonio Tarver is PPV worthy? I think HBO execs should realize that they are nullifying the goodwill they've created by giving us the Arturo Gatti-Micky Ward classics by trying to milk us dry the rest of the year.

JAMES HAVDOUGLAS
Arnold, MO



Does Winky Wright really deserve a big fight? Not according to reader Roger Rampage, who writes to say that he feels Wright should earn the right to a major payday by beating somebody besides Bronco McKart.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

WHO SCORED WHAT?

Although I respect his knowledge and opinions about boxing, I cannot agree with Nigel Collins when he writes in the January '04 RING EXTRA that Shane Mosley beat Oscar De La Hoya in their recent rematch. I would be very interested to learn what were the scores of the judges, round by round.

TOM BATES
Berkeley, CA

[Editor's note: See chart below for the round-by-round scores.] ■

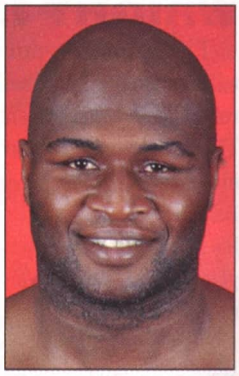
Not all fans agreed with the Mosley-De La Hoya II verdict, including reader Tom Bates, who also wants to see the round-by-round scoring of the official judges. As there were no even rounds, all rounds were scored 10-9 for one of the fighters.

Judge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Duane Ford	D	M	D	D	D	M	D	M	M	M	M	M	115-113 Mosley
Stanley Christodoulou	M	D	D	D	M	M	D	D	M	M	M	M	115-113 Mosley
Anek Hongtongkam	M	D	M	D	D	D	D	M	M	M	M	M	115-113 Mosley

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

TONEY: McCLINE WILL RECLINE IN FIVE



Toney: "Big Time" tough talk

Not many of us believed **James Toney** when he said he was going to knock out **Evander Holyfield**. Sure, most of us gave "Lights Out" a chance at winning the fight, but actually stopping an all-time great heavyweight with all-time great heart and an all-time great chin? Preposterous.

Yet Toney went out and did what he said he would. Now, when he says he's going to be even more destructive against the 6'6", 270-pound **Jameel McCline**, we almost have to take the 5'10" blown-up middleweight at his word.

"This is going to be an easy fight for me—very easy," Toney told THE RING. "I'm going to knock him out in five rounds; I promise."

Unlike some trash-talkers, however, Toney's smart enough to compliment his opponent out of one side of his mouth while he makes bold predictions out of the other. The more he builds McCline up as a dangerous opponent, the less we can write it off if and when he defeats the behemoth.

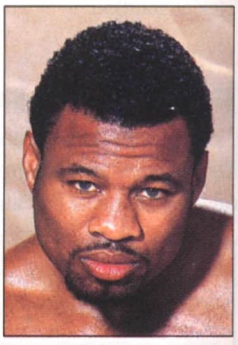
"Jameel presents a big threat," Toney said. "He's a huge guy. He'll get up for me, he'll be ready. He'll come with guns blazing. I think he's the best guy that's available, and that's why I'm fighting him.

"There's always a 'but.' When I beat Holyfield, everyone said he was old. Now what are they going to say, that Jameel's inexperienced? They can say what they want. Anyone who wants to fight James Toney, I say bring his ass."

McCline's ass will be brought before Toney on February 7, as part of a Showtime doubleheader that also features the tape-delayed junior welterweight world title fight between **Kostya Tszyu** and **Sharmba Mitchell** in Moscow. Even if the mechanical McCline appears custom-built for the well-oiled Toney to excel against, you can't deny the intrigue of seeing such an extreme David-vs.-Goliath matchup—nor can you dismiss the Goliath entirely, no matter how great the chasm in skill. Toney beating McCline still won't prove that the best of the smaller heavyweights can beat the best of the super-sized heavyweights—none of the little guys have manhandled **Lennox Lewis** or the **Klitschkos** *yet*—but it won't be a meaningless win, either.

And Toney assures us that it will indeed be a David-vs.-Goliath matchup; in other words, you don't have to worry about Toney stuffing his face until he somehow enters the ring the larger man. Lights Out said he expects to come in around 212-215 pounds, in great shape, and ready to slay a giant.

LISTEN UP



Mosley: Maybe Mayorga in March?

Showtime's first quarter of '04 is coming together nicely, as the February 7 doubleheader is book-ended by appealing shows in January and March. On January 3, **Acelino Freitas** will move up to lightweight to face credible **Artur Grigorian**, while CompuBox heroes **Kassim Ouma** and **J.C. Candelo** meet in an evenly matched junior middleweight co-feature. And on March 6, we'll see a rematch to one of the best fights of 2003, as **Joel Casamayor** grants **Diego Corrales** a chance at revenge … March 6 may also bring us the first true superfight of '04, as HBO Pay-Per-View is holding the date for a potential clash between world junior middleweight champ **Shane Mosley** and world welterweight champ **Ricardo Mayorga**. If it comes off, it would be the first bout between two *real* world champions since THE RING introduced its new championship policy in 2001 … HBO PPV is also holding February 21 for a meeting between **Fernando Vargas** and **Javier Castillejo** … Two HBO *Boxing After Dark* shows are also coming together for the new year. On January 31, two exciting Top Rank titlists get potentially easy fights, as welterweight beltholder **Antonio Margarito** meets **Hercules Kyvelos**, and bantamweight king **Rafael Marquez** faces alphabet mandatory **Pete Frissina**. And on a yet-to-be-determined date in February or March, Arkansas' two rising contenders, heavyweight **Dominick Guinn** and middleweight **Jermain Taylor**, will share a *B.A.D.* show in their home state. Guinn may face fellow unbeaten **Juan Carlos Gomez** … NBC has announced its next dates for *Budweiser Boxing*: the five consecutive Saturdays from April 17-May 15. The May 1 show will serve as a lead-in to the Kentucky Derby, and the May 15 broadcast will precede the Preakness Stakes. ■

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